



City of Cranston, RI Comprehensive Plan



2010



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Introduction

This Comprehensive Plan has been updated to guide future growth and change in Cranston. This Comprehensive Plan Update lays out the means and methods to create the best possible future for Cranston for the next five years and beyond.

Understanding how this City is built and populated, and where it is headed, helped formulate this Plan. The data collected helped describe the City as it is today and the people who participated in the outreach effort helped determine where the City should direct its future efforts and resources.

The City Administration, City Council, Planning Commission, and Planning Department will take lead roles in many of the proposed actions. However, what will make this Plan viable is the participation and commitment of Cranston residents. Strong community support for this Plan will turn the plans vision into a reality. Consider this Plan as an invitation to your participation in shaping Cranston's future.

Where is Cranston Now?

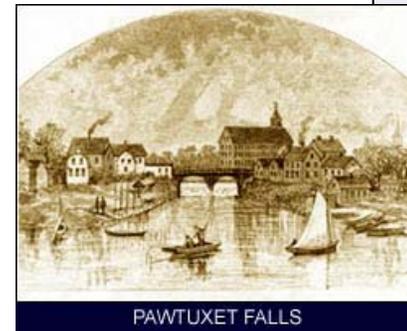
Cranston has valuable assets and resources in its people, buildings and environment. The following summary statistics will help create a recent picture of the City.

Land Use

- There is an equal amount of land programmed for residential purposes as there is for institutional, commercial and industrial combined.
- Public agencies (local, state, and federal governments) and non-profits (churches, schools, and private hospitals) use over 13% of the land in Cranston.
- Over 11% of the land in Cranston is vacant and designated for residential uses.

Demographics

- The population of Cranston has grown 0.15 to 0.25% per year for the past eight years, while the number of households in western Cranston has grown approximately 2.3% per year, during the same period.
- Cranston's central census tracts contain nearly 2/3 of the City's population and almost 3/4 of its households.
- The change in population and number of households are expected to remain below 1% for eastern and central Cranston, but are expected to increase more than 2% for western Cranston.
- The median family income for Cranston was \$55,241 in 2000.
- Household incomes in western Cranston are approximately 80% higher than in central and eastern Cranston.



PAWTUXET FALLS



Retail

- The Garden City Center is the largest retail center in Cranston.
- Cranston's retail businesses capture a substantial net inflow of consumer spending by capturing dollars from people that live outside of the City.
- New development at Chapel View is expected to compete with other high-end retailers in the Providence region.



Rolfe Square

Natural Resources Facts

- Key partnerships were established between the West Bay Land Trust, Champlin Foundation, RIDEM, and the City to acquire open space.
- The City acquired more than 350 acres of mostly undeveloped land as protected open space over the past 12 years.
- The Historic Scenic Farm Loop was created in 2002 to help support protection and acquisition of agricultural land in western

Where is this City Headed?

There have been some significant changes in Cranston; the City's future holds the promise of more to come.

Housing Facts

- Housing prices increased more than 3 times the average annual % increase in personal income between 1998 and 2003.
- Almost 38% of the housing units in Cranston are multifamily units, and 33% of all housing units are rental.
- More than 55% of Cranston's housing units were built before 1960.
- The majority of new residential construction (71%) between 1993 and 2003 has been in western Cranston, and more than 99% of these were for single-family homes.

What is working?

Finances

The City budget is back on track. The City has benefited from a surplus in recent years.

Infrastructure

The City continues to invest in its schools, emergency services, and utility systems to the benefit of many neighborhoods and commercial areas.

Growth

City growth has been relatively slow, but is being managed with a combination of policies, regulations and review procedures.

What needs work?

Growth Management

Development in the City can be redirected to improve the local businesses and neighborhoods. Connecting new public policy goals with tailored, specific development will position the City as sustainable for future generations.

Pastore Center

The state is leasing office space in Providence. However, here in nearby Cranston, large, beautiful, historic buildings lay vacant and awaiting maintenance at the Pastore Center. Some of the buildings are now too deteriorated to use, but others provide an opportunity for reuse and historic preservation.

Natural and City History

Historic and natural resources are still being lost to development, particularly the former farm lands and open spaces in the western neighborhoods and in many of the older historic districts in the eastern areas.

Reinvigorating Neighborhood Centers

Tools to improve the character of commercial areas along the major City roads have been in place since the previous Comprehensive Plan. However, safety, architectural character, parking, and accessibility in the village centers remain prominent issues.



Pastore Center, abandoned building

How Do We Get There?

To address these issues and continue on the right path, the City must make a commitment to complete certain actions through policies, financial commitments and other actions. We call these the means and methods, as laid out in the Implementation section. The means and methods generally involve:

Means: Forming coalitions and finding advocates, such as local business coalitions and citizen advocacy groups; approving the funding and obtaining grants from public and private sources;

garnering State support through policies and procedures, such as reinvestment in the Pastore Center.

Methods: Following the steps for action as outlined in the Implementation section, the City may adopt the policies of Smart Growth and create new standards for development. The City may also program public investment to support community goals such as extending public utilities to new private development when other public goals are met.

The heart of a Comprehensive Plan is the program of land use choices and decisions. However, as suggested, the full implementation of the Plan will require many different actions by many different people and entities. This Plan shows ways to achieve its goals and objectives.

Planning History

The City of Cranston has a strong history of planning. It regularly reviews and periodically updates its Comprehensive Plan to ensure that it remains a valid tool for guiding growth in the City. The last full Comprehensive Plan process was completed in 1992, which has represented the framework for land use and development in the City along with the many amendments that have kept the Plan up-to-date. The Comprehensive Plan includes goals, policies, and strategies for the City to employ in guiding its own actions and those of others—both public and private – as Cranston continues to grow and develop.

This Comprehensive Plan Update continues this tradition of planning. As Cranston approaches the build-out of its residential, commercial and industrial-zoned land, it becomes more critical to identify ways of successfully developing and redeveloping the City's economic resources, while protecting its natural and cultural resources, maintaining quality public services and facilities, and ensuring the long-term affordability of its housing stock. These are some of the more important issues that guided the Comprehensive Plan process.

Planning Process

The Comprehensive Plan Update was developed through phases involving multiple, interrelated tasks. Each phase resulted in a product designed to contribute directly to the development of a comprehensive plan, by incorporating the action steps required to implement the plan.

The initial stage of the Plan Update process involved gathering information on the existing conditions and trends within Cranston through research of existing documents and studies, surveys, and meetings with key City representatives. The information was grouped into key topics: natural resources, open space, historic resources, demographics, land uses, housing, economics, circulation, and services and facilities.

The next stage involved three facilitated public visioning sessions in which the existing conditions information was presented and attendees were able to help formulate the preferred goals and objectives for Cranston's future.

Strategies and actions were then developed that ensure that the challenges identified in the existing conditions analysis could be overcome and that all of the opportunities within Cranston are fully realized in accordance with the City's goals and objectives.

Community Participation

Overview of the Community Involvement Effort

When initially designed, the Community Participation Strategy for the Cranston Comprehensive Plan was aimed at getting input from residents and making them aware of the public process to manage growth and change in their community.

In actual practice, the meaningful and effective involvement of the community was an integral and critical component in developing this Plan and the public was involved in each step of the process. The public participation process made a positive contribution to the planning process through a variety of media types and effort including workshops, a survey, interviews, newspaper articles, and a website.

Public Outreach

The public outreach component focused on informing the public of the basic issues at appropriate points of the planning process. Specifically, public workshops and meetings were advertised in two local newspapers, the *Cranston Herald* and the *Providence Journal*. Information was posted on a web site created specifically for the Plan. A questionnaire was distributed to seek public input about the City's services, resources, and needs.

Public Input

Residents, City staff, and key stakeholders provided a collective source of information, which was very helpful in forming the recommendations.

Public Meetings and Workshops

A series of public meetings and workshops were held in the course of updating the Comprehensive Plan. At the first workshop, participants were asked to identify and prioritize important issues and needs as they relate to the plan elements. Participants broke into small groups to review and discuss their views. At the second and third public meetings, residents commented on the proposed recommendations that were based on the analysis of the existing conditions.

Interviews

Interviews were held in person and by phone with key stakeholders, representatives, and agencies that have interests with the city's resources, assets, services, and programs. Their valuable input helped determine the needs and potential solutions to improve the City and manage its growth.

Survey

A mail survey was conducted by the City Planning Department to inform the public of the planning process and to collect their input about city issues and services. The primary purpose of the survey was to reach out to the community to take a "pulse" of public opinion on the potential goals and ways to improve the City through the planning process. The Planning Department and the consultant used the responses to formulate Plan actions for the City.

Group or Method	Type of Involvement
Public Meetings and Workshop	Provided the community's views on existing and potential land uses
Community Planning Department	Helped direct the planning process
Survey	Provided representative community view of existing and potential uses
Interviews with key agencies and users	Provided direct input into specific needs, constraints, and opportunities

State Requirements for Planning

The Rhode Island Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Regulation Act of 1988 requires not only that the Comprehensive Plan be updated at least every five years, but also that each community's zoning be amended to conform with its Comprehensive Plan within 18 months after the Plan is approved by the Rhode Island Department of Administration, Statewide Planning Program.

The goals, polices, actions, strategies, and implementation schedule within all the elements of this Plan Update, when adopted by the City

Council and accepted by the State Planning Administration, supplement those of the previous 1992 Plan. This ensures a clear understanding of which documents and actions will be used during the approval and implementation process that is required by the Act.

Plan Format

This Comprehensive Plan Update is intended to provide new ideas and make any necessary modifications to the path dictated by the 1992 Comprehensive Plan. Many of the recommendations in the 1992 Plan were either implemented in accordance with that plan or are relevant today. Since this Update needs to be informed by the past efforts, the format of this document presents each element of the Comprehensive Plan in three sections:

- I. Summary and Accomplishments of the 1992 Plan
- II. Current Conditions and Issues
- III. Strategies and Actions

The first section of each Plan element reviews that section as it was presented in the 1992 Plan. It also contains the City's accomplishments made while implementing the recommendations of

that Plan in the interim years. The second section of each element summarizes additional and new information that is relevant to the element including new conditions, programs, census data, and other information that illustrates how issues affecting this element may have changed. The third section of the element is the proposed program of key recommendations and actions, which will attain the City's goals and objectives over the next five years.

The survey allowed people to state that:

- The most common reasons for living in Cranston were that it is a nice place to live, work, and grow;
- But, improvement of the character of the community is still desired (highest ranking, by at least 25% were signs, landscaping, accessibility, shopping, trees);
- They were split on residential growth issues such as how fast, how much, and where it should occur with 42% saying growth is too rapid and 39% saying it is about right;
- Expansion of the commercial/industrial tax base is a good idea to 60-70%, but 24-25% thought it should be limited to neighborhood services along Cranston Street and the existing industrial zones in western Cranston;
- Affordable housing remains as an issue to address according to 25%;
- Recycling is excellent (94% participation) and other City services are generally good, with the exception of snow removal (36% disapproval);
- The three most frequently used roads are Park Avenue, Reservoir Avenue and Sockanosset Crossroads (85% use them weekly); and these are also seen as the most unsafe roads (35-40%);
- The vast majority (84%) do not use public transportation; and,
- In the top ranked items, they want to see more open space in new residential development (25%), acquisition of new public spaces (25%), expansion of recreation areas (25%), and better access to Narragansett Bay (24%).

Overall Themes and Changes

This Comprehensive Plan Update has proposed certain actions that are new or modified from the 1992 Comprehensive Plan. The major changes are in the following areas:

Land Use

- Adoption of Smart Growth policies to guide development projects
- Modifying the proposal for a western Cranston village center to accommodate current ideas for mixed use, agricultural preservation, and cluster development
- Modifying zoning to ensure existing, built areas conform to the historic development pattern
- Promoting smart growth and mixed use development on sites around the City

Housing

- Creating a new Housing Task Force to guide affordable housing programs in Cranston
- Adopting inclusionary housing regulations that allow the market forces to help create new affordable units

Economic Development

- Proposing a Transit Oriented Development Project in the Elmwood/Wellington industrial area
- Targeting key redevelopment projects in other sites spread throughout the City

Natural Resources

- Adopting a farm-based retail program to help preserve agriculture in western Cranston
- Adopting low-impact and green development standards for new development

Historic Preservation

- Establishing local historic districts in Edgewood, Pawtuxet Village and Norwood Avenue

Services and Facilities

- Use connections to the water and sewer lines to promote conservation of resources and agriculture, as well as the creation of a village center in western Cranston

Open Space

- Use of innovate tools for land use and development to protect open space
- Create a series of linked green ways and blue ways for connected open space

Circulation

- Acting on a new program to address the safety and congestion on Park Avenue
- The creation of a Transit Oriented Development project at the Elmwood/Wellington industrial area to encourage alternative transportation options.



ELEMENT 1: Goals and Policies Statement

Organization of the Goals and Policies Statement

The Goals and Policies Statement incorporates the elements of the Comprehensive Plan:

- Element 2: Land Use Plan
- Element 3: Housing
- Element 4: Economic Development
- Element 5, Natural Resources
- Element 5A : Historic Preservation
- Element 6: Services and Facilities
- Element 7: Open Space and Recreation
- Element 8: Circulation

For each element, goals address issues that were identified either in the inventory and analysis phase of the planning process, or through the public participation process. These goals are broad statements framed to indicate a desired future condition or action by the City of Cranston. Each goal is followed by one or more related policies and objectives, which are intended to help achieve the goal.

Consistency with State Planning Goals

The Rhode Island Comprehensive and Land Use Regulation Act specifies that the Goals and Policies Statement “shall enumerate how the Plan is consistent with the overall goals of the Act, the State Guide Plan, and related elements.” Accordingly, the goals for each element of the Comprehensive Plan are introduced with a relevant statement of goals from the State Planning Act.

In addition to the goals that are listed under each of the other elements, four state goals with more general applicability to the Comprehensive Plan and planning process are also important.

These goals relate to the need for consistency between state and local planning and for public involvement in the preparation of the Comprehensive Plan Update. These goals are:

- To promote consistency of state actions and programs with municipal comprehensive plans and provide for review procedures to ensure that state goals and policies are reflected in municipal comprehensive plans and state guide plans.
- To ensure that adequate and uniform data are available to municipal and state government as the basis for comprehensive planning and land use regulation.
- To ensure that municipal land use regulations and decisions are consistent with the comprehensive plan of the municipality and to ensure state land use regulations and decisions are consistent with state guide plans.
- To encourage the involvement of all citizens in the formulation, review and adoption of the comprehensive plan.

ELEMENT 2: LAND USE PLAN

Rhode Island Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Regulation Act Goals:

To promote orderly growth and development that recognizes the natural characteristics of the land, its suitability for use, and the availability of existing and proposed public and/ or private services and facilities.

To encourage the use of innovative development regulations and techniques that promote the development of land suitable for development while protecting our natural, cultural, historical, and recreational resources and achieving a balanced pattern of land uses.

1. GOALS AND POLICIES STATEMENT

LAND USE GOALS (LUG) AND POLICIES (LUP)

LUG-1 **Preserve the rural quality and critical resources of Western Cranston through appropriate land use controls.**

- LUP-1.1. Promote residential land use patterns that concentrate and compact development and maintain significant percentage of open space.
- LUP-1.2. Preserve, in significant tracts, 20 per cent of the remaining open space in western Cranston, or 500 acres (exclusive of wetlands), through restrictions associated with clustering of future development or through purchase.
- LUP-1.3. Preserve existing farmland and recreational open space areas through land use regulation and taxation policies.
- LUP- 1.4. Preserve and enhance the quality of existing valuable resources including wetlands, surface water, ground water, wildlife habitats and migration corridors, historic sites, scenic views and unique cultural resources.

LUG-2 **Promote mixed use (commercial, industrial, and residential) development that will:**

- **Focus on a few key redevelopment sites;**
- **Improve the quality of new development;**
- **Incorporate ‘smart growth’ principles.**

- LUP-2.1. Adopt a mixed-use development plan that connects to mass transit for industrial land between Elmwood and Wellington Avenue.
- LUP-2.2. Adopt mixed-use development zoning for proposed village centers.
- LUP-2.3. Improve architectural and site design standards to increase the quality of new development.

LUP-2.4. Adopt streetscape design guidelines to apply to all construction projects.

LUP-2.5. Apply Smart Growth principles to include standards for density, mixed use, accessibility and quality of design.

LUP-2.6. Implement policies that protect residential neighborhoods from commercial encroachment through regulation, appropriate buffers, development design standards, traffic planning, and site plan review.

LUG-3 **Locate new commercial development in western Cranston in highly accessible, strategic locations.**

LUP-3.1. Propose a village center plan for Pippin Orchard Road/Scituate Avenue, or Route 37/Phenix Avenue using smart growth principles.

LUG-4 **Ensure that sufficient land is properly zoned and provided with adequate infrastructure to provide for the City’s future industrial development needs.**

LUP-4.1. Maintain a current inventory of existing industrial facilities that could accommodate expansion and redevelopment; identify barriers to economic growth and the public actions necessary to preserve the existing industrial base.

LUP-4.2. Protect the capacity and integrity of roads, sewers and water systems serving the Howard and Western Cranston Industrial Parks, in order to preserve these areas as resources for long-term industrial development.

LUP-4.3. Prevent the intrusion of commercial land retail activities into industrial zones, particularly those that might lead to strip commercial development. However, mixed-use commercial office and industrial parks and auxiliary commercial activities that serve the

1. GOALS AND POLICIES STATEMENT

needs of an industrial park should not be discouraged.

LUG-5 Ensure that redevelopment of major sites for economic development incorporates the protection of environment and neighborhood character.

LUP-5.1 Promote reuse of the Pastore Center to enhance the surrounding area (i.e. Chapel View, Garden City) as a commercial and civic center.

LUG-6 Ensure that reuse, reorganization and/or disposition of State facilities at the Pastore Center is consistent with Cranston's community development needs and objectives.

LUP-6.1 Preserve remaining open space at the Pastore Center, and promote adaptive reuse of existing structures where possible as an alternative to new construction.

LUP-6.2 Prevent, to the extent practical, land use and land value impacts from the correctional facilities on the surrounding neighborhoods.

LUP-6.3 Encourage the use of perimeter buildings for administrative and similar low-impact uses, in order to buffer adjacent neighborhoods and business areas from adverse impacts.

LUG-7 Improve the edges of the Pastore Center.

LUP-7.1 Where properties at the Pastore Center are found in excess of State needs, promote private investment on the edges of the Pastore Center to buffer the site and improve economic development opportunities in the City, as has been accomplished at the Chapel View and Golfing Partners developments.

LUP-7.2 In the remaining areas, create a Governmental / Institutional zoning district (GI) to be applied to the developed area of the

Pastore Center, in place of the existing Open Space (S-1) district.

LUG-8 Ensure that the zoning map is consistent with the future land use map.

LUP-8.1 Amend commercial zoning along major arterial corridors to discourage "strip" development and to prevent adverse impacts on adjacent uses.

LUP-8.2 Strengthen protection of open space corridors along major water bodies and wetlands by zoning them for Open Space.

LUP-8.3 Other than the specified rezoning activities identified for City action in the Land Use Element, rezoning of private property shall be the sole responsibility of the private property owners to achieve consistency with the future land use map.

LUG-9 Protect and stabilize existing residential neighborhoods.

LUP-9.1 Protect and stabilize existing residential neighborhoods by increasing open space, improving roadway conditions, and making the zoning conform to existing uses.

LUP-9.2 Continue to give attention to neighborhood revitalization through code enforcement and financing mechanisms, particularly in areas of aging housing stock and low median incomes.

LUP-9.3 Preserve the existing density of established neighborhoods.

LUP-9.4 Review existing development in flood zones to determine proper mitigation of flood impacts.

LUG-10 Ensure future residential growth in western Cranston conforms to conservation subdivision design.

1. GOALS AND POLICIES STATEMENT

LUP-10.1 Adopt a utilities services plan that supports smart growth and conservation subdivision design standards.

LUG-11 Enhance services and facilities in western Cranston that support future growth.

LUP-11.1 Site a new public facilities and services center to support residents and businesses in the western portion of the City.

LUG-12 Create additional bicycle and pedestrian links throughout the City.

LUP-12.1 Create greenway, bicycle, and pedestrian links that make connections between the City's historic sites, public buildings, open space, and natural resources.

LUP-12.2 Adopt regulations that require inclusion of links that connect private developments with public ways.

LUG-13 Preserve scenic landscapes and view sheds.

LU-13.1 Establish a scenic preservation program to preserve scenic landscapes and view sheds.

LU-13.2 Identify roads for adoption as scenic roads.

ELEMENT 3: HOUSING GOALS (HG) AND POLICIES (HP)

Rhode Island Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Regulation Act Goal:

To promote a balance of housing choices, for all income levels and age groups, which recognizes the affordability of housing as the responsibility of each municipality and the state.

HG-1 Ensure that future residential development in western Cranston is consistent with the capacity of the area's natural resources and infrastructure, and preserves community character.

HP-1.1 Maintain zoning densities that reflect planned municipal service levels and natural resource constraints.

HP1.2 Maintain rural densities where desired regardless of availability of improvements to municipal infrastructure such as public water, sewer and roads.

HG-2 Permit a variety of residential development types to achieve multiple community objectives.

HP-2.1 Develop a system of density bonuses for the clustering of new residential development in order to conserve open space, preserve natural systems and wildlife habitat, minimize municipal service costs, and maintain the sense of rural character.

HP-2.2 Enact flexible development standards that attain desired community objectives, but also provide a wide range of building types, uses, subdivisions, and site plans.

HG-3 Achieve a balance between economic development and housing in the City.

HP3.1 Provide housing resources to support the range of jobs that reflects the City's economic base, and encourage the development of housing at levels that are consistent with household purchasing power.

HP-3.2 Maintain the stability of established neighborhoods in connection with continued economic development and revitalization: in particular, protect neighborhoods abutting the City's major commercial corridors from adverse impacts arising from incompatible uses.

HG-4 Promote housing opportunity for a wide range of household types and income levels.

HP-4.1 Maintain a varied housing stock, with units of different age, size and type that are affordable to a wide range of incomes.

1. GOALS AND POLICIES STATEMENT

- HP-4.2 Identify potential sites for redevelopment options for future residential use, and mixed use.
- HP-4.3 Promote regulations that facilitate the development of affordable housing.
- HP-4.4 Identify gaps in existing public and private financing programs for housing development, purchase and rental, and develop new mechanisms where necessary.
- HP-4.5 Require that long-term affordability be a component of City-supported affordable housing development.
- HP-4.6 Promote the development of new housing that is affordable to average first-time buyers living in the City.
- HP-4.7 Promote the development of special housing alternatives for the elderly and handicapped.
- HG-5 Conserve housing resources, especially affordable housing units, to preserve the base housing stock, as the costs of locating and constructing new housing units are significant.**
- HP-5.1 Reduce the burden of zoning and building regulations, to enable two- and three-family unit dwellings to be easily modified, maintained and improved within the existing neighborhoods.
- HP-5.2 Review zoning for existing residential neighborhoods to ensure the zoning matches, as closely as possible, the dimensions and unit types of what has already been built.
- HG-6 Use public resources to support and build new housing to meet the state affordability criteria.**
- HP-6.1 Encourage inclusion of affordable housing in projects that meet the Smart Growth goals of this Comprehensive Plan and the State Affordable Housing goals.
- HG-7 Establish a local Housing Task Force that will maintain the database on local affordable housing units and determine the programs to produce more of these units where they support local needs.**
- HP-7.1 Create a Housing Task Force to research, advocate, and coordinate affordable housing programs.
- HP-7.2 Create a Housing Trust Fund to generate revenue for local housing assistance program initiatives.
- HG-8 Set attainable, short-term goals for new affordable housing units.**
- HP-8.1 Set a yearly goal of 30 new affordable housing units to produce 150 units during the next five-year period. (ACTION)
- HG-9 Adopt inclusionary housing regulations that require affordable housing for new housing projects.**
- HP-9.1 Enact inclusionary housing regulations that require a proportion of affordable housing.
- HG-10 Conserve resources in new subdivisions.**
- HP-10.1 Require conservation-type subdivisions on remaining undeveloped land to conserve natural resources, protect public resources, improve property values, and improve accessibility.
- HG-11 Initiate public education and outreach on housing affordability.**
- HP-11.1 Sponsor a citywide public education program on affordability, organized by the Housing Task Force.

1. GOALS AND POLICIES STATEMENT

ELEMENT 4: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS (EDG) AND POLICIES (EDP)

Rhode Island Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Regulation Act Goal:

To promote an economic climate which increases quality job opportunities and overall economic well-being of each municipality and the state.

EDG-1A Preserve and increase employment opportunities for Cranston residents.

EDG-1B Maintain and increase the quality of job opportunities – in terms of wages, skill requirements, and working conditions – available to Cranston residents.

EDP-1.1 Maintain, enhance, and encourage diversification of the City's present manufacturing base.

EDP-1.2 Encourage tax policies that facilitate business growth.

EDP-1.3 Encourage the creation and growth of startup and early-stage business.

EDP-1.4 Provide assistance to socially and environmentally responsible enterprises, especially those that hire locally.

EDP-1.5 Provide technical, financial and regulatory assistance to job-creating enterprises to supplement and leverage resources for lenders and investors.

EDG-2 Attract capital into the Cranston area and expand the City's economic base.

EDP-2.1 Encourage the location and expansion of businesses with wide regional, national or international markets.

EDP-2.2 Encourage existing businesses to develop export and/or Internet-based markets.

EDP-2.3 Maintain and enhance the growth of a diverse array of small, growth-oriented, value-adding business concerns.

EDG-3 Add to the City's taxable property base by constructing industrial and commercial structures which are properly designed and sited in keeping with environmental, planning and design considerations.

EDP-3.1 Strengthen the standards for industrially zoned land to prevent the erosion of the City's supply of land suitable for these purposes.

EDG-4 Revitalize underused areas of the City for uses that are in keeping with the needs and values of the community.

EDP-4.1 Continue the City's active role in seeking the redevelopment of major industrial and institutional sites for economic development.

EDP-5 Ensure that new and expanded commercial development along major arterials exhibits a high standard of design quality and is compatible with existing roadway functions and adjacent residential neighborhoods.

EDP-5.1 Adjust zoning map boundaries of commercial districts along major arterials, and refine use regulations applicable to such districts, to provide for adequate commercial services while minimizing impacts on adjoining residential neighborhoods.

EDG-6 Target development sites for Smart Growth projects.

EDP-6.1 Target high-end business growth in professional, service-oriented businesses to create a market for office space.

EDP-6.2 Encourage an appropriately-scaled neighborhood or village commercial center to serve the growing markets in western Cranston.

1. GOALS AND POLICIES STATEMENT

EDP-6.3 Promote large-scale, smart growth redevelopment opportunities at strategic locations to accommodate mixed-use, transit-oriented development. Properties along I-95 in the Wellington/Elmwood industrial area offer the best opportunities.EDP-6.4 Encourage redevelopment opportunities at locations near Garden City Center, Rolfe Square, Knightsville, and along Interstate 295.

EDG-7 Improve/build neighborhood commercial areas at various sites through formulating and implementing revitalization projects.

EDP-7.1 Promote the development or redevelopment of neighborhood commercial centers to service local market areas to reduce cross-town traffic. New neighborhood village center developments should be focused at Phenix Avenue and Natick Avenue, and Scituate Avenue and Pippin Orchard Road. Redevelopment of neighborhood centers should continue to occur at Pawtuxet Village, Knightsville, and Rolfe Square.

EDP-7.2. Distinguish between each commercial center by developing design guidelines for public properties which include signage, furniture, landscaping, public parking areas, bicycle ways and sidewalks.

EDP-7.3 Develop design guidelines for site development which address different neighborhood conditions and smart growth goals. Distinguish between each type of commercial area: major commercial center, village center, highway or arterial commercial, and development adjacent to transit.

EDG-8 Complement the State's Urban Ventures program with a business incubator or small business assistance program.

EDP-8.1 Continue the support of the Urban Ventures program to encourage new small businesses.

EDG-9 Have a clear and concise and efficient development process throughout all departments of the City.

EDP-9.1 Work with regulatory staff to proactively inform and assist developers in regulatory and approval processes and otherwise improve relations with developers, businesses, and property owners.

EDP-9.2 Continue providing hands-on assistance to businesses with financing, permitting, and other needs.

EDG-10 Provide job training for new or relocated workers and match jobs and workers.

EDP-10.1 Promote job training and growth in professional, service-oriented businesses.

EDP-10.2 Consider the establishment of a marketing program, associated with the local and regional chambers of commerce, with participation of city funds and staff.

EDP-10.3 Create programs to match job seekers and businesses in cooperation with educational institutions in the area: URI, RIC, Johnson & Wales and other area colleges.

EDG-11 Target sites for industrial and commercial projects.

EDP-11.1 A number of sites (i.e. former Trolley Barn site, Route 2 corridor), may support additional retailers seeking entry to the market.

EDP-11.2 Encourage hotel and lodging accommodations in locations where there is easy access to the T.F. Green airport.

EDP-11.3 Promote leisure and/or entertainment-related businesses to compliment the Park Theater redevelopment in Rolfe Square.

1. GOALS AND POLICIES STATEMENT

- EDP-11.4 Collaborate with the State in redeveloping the Pastore Center to ensure there is a private commercial component.
- EDP-11.5 Review the sewer line extension and roadway acceptance policies to ensure that they promote the type of development planned for western Cranston.

ELEMENT 5: NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES GOALS (NRG) AND POLICIES (NRP)

Rhode Island Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Regulation Act Goal:

To promote the protection of the natural, historic and cultural resources of each municipality and the state.

NRG-1 Protect and enhance Cranston's natural environment and resources. Establish a balance between natural resource protection and growth-related needs.

- NRP-1.1 Establish watershed management plans in accordance with RIDEM standards to address potential pollution and to comply with NPDES Phase II requirements. Seek non-point source mitigation funds from the state to assist.
- NRP-1.2 Seek federal and state Brownfield program assistance to promote the redevelopment of industrial and commercial areas.
- NRP-1.3 Adopt a Transfer of Development Rights program to better manage development in western Cranston.
- NRP-1.4 Adopt a 'farm-based retail' overlay district.
- NRP-1.5 Target and preserve open spaces that have value as scenic, agricultural, recreational, wetland, water, and wildlife resources.
- NRP-1.6 Preserve and protect critical fish and wildlife habitat areas and areas containing rare and endangered species.

- NRP-1.7 Preserve and protect environmentally sensitive natural resource areas, including prime farmlands, steep slopes, floodplains, watersheds, aquifers, shorelines, and coastal and inland wetlands.
- NRP-1.8 Direct new growth away from environmentally-sensitive areas such as wetlands, steep slopes, and soils that have severe limitations for on-site waste water disposal.

NRG-2 Create watershed management plans.

- NRP-2.1 Establish Watershed Management Plans where necessary and in cooperation with adjacent communities.
- NRP-2.2 Create restoration plans for the banks of the Pocasset and Pawtuxet Rivers where they have been degraded by roadways and development.

NRG-3 Protect and enhance the quality of Cranston's ground and surface water resources and supplies in order to meet, or where appropriate exceed, state and federal water quality standards.

- NRP-3.1 Protect and enhance water quality through informed land use policies, regulatory enforcement, and proper infrastructure maintenance and improvements.
- NRP-3.2 Require construction practices that minimize runoff, soil erosion, and sedimentation.
- NRP-3.3 Direct development to areas with the appropriate soil, slope and drainage conditions.
- NRP-3.4 In areas where no municipal sewer or water services are available, ensure that development is located on land that is capable of supporting on-site water and septic disposal systems.

1. GOALS AND POLICIES STATEMENT

- NRP-3.5 Ensure that land use activities within the Scituate Reservoir watershed does not contribute to the degradation of the reservoir.
- NRP-3.6 Promote environmentally sound wastewater management systems.
- NRP-3.7 Develop programs for the reduction of nonpoint source pollution affecting Cranston's streams, rivers and ponds, including storm water runoff and septic system failures.

NRG-4 Restore Brownfield sites back to productive and safe use.

- NRP-4.1 Catalogue known and suspected Brownfield sites, and identify the extent of threats to public health and safety.
- NRP-4.2 Work with federal and state agencies and private interests to achieve remediation and economically viable reuse of such sites that will support the costs of clean-up.

NRG-5 Require improved environmental design standards in new development.

- NRP-5.1 Adopt a 'green' building program for all municipal construction.
- NRP-5.2 Upgrade environmental design standards in subdivision and site plan review regulations.
- NRP-5.3 Adopt standards, such as Low Impact Development techniques, that maintain and enhance watersheds to better manage stormwater and roads in new construction.

ELEMENT 5A : HISTORIC PRESERVATION GOALS (HPG) AND POLICIES (HPP)

Rhode Island Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Regulation Act Goal:

To promote the protection of the natural, historic and cultural resources of each municipality and the state.

HPG-1 Protect and preserve properties of historic and architectural significance, as well as known and suspected archeological sites, cemeteries, engineering structures and city-owned properties.

- HPP-1.1 Continue to expand, maintain, and regularly update the comprehensive inventory of historic and archeological resources.
- HPP-1.2 Continue to work with private property owners to encourage preservation of known archaeological and historic sites on their land.

HPG-2 Integrate historic preservation planning concerns with other areas of municipal planning and decision-making. Promote development policies which are sensitive to preservation concerns and goals.

- HPP-2.1 Provide additional, formal mechanisms for the Historic District Commission to review and comment on development projects and work with property owners.
- HPP-2.2 Develop new city ordinances and programs to preserve individual historic properties.

HPG-3 Survey, inventory, and designate local historic preservation districts.

- HPP-3.1 Designate the Pawtuxet Village as a Local Historic District.
- HPP-3.2 Designate the Edgewood Historic District as a Local Historic District.
- HPP-3.3 Designate the Norwood Avenue Historic District as a Local Historic District.
- HPP-3.4 Designate the Fenner House as a Local Historic District.
- HPP-3.5 Designate the Sprague Mansion as a Local Historic District.

HPG-4 Expand historic preservation planning and development policies.

1. GOALS AND POLICIES STATEMENT

HPP-4.1 Explore the potential for promoting tourism geared to historic resources in the City.

HPG-5 Promote education and public awareness of historic preservation opportunities.

HPP-5.1 The Cranston Historic District Commission should target specific areas such as Pawtuxet Village to educate the neighborhood about the benefits of a local historic district designation.

HPP-5.2 Educate public officials and City residents of the importance of preserving historic building and places.

HPP-5.3 Distribute information and guidance on preservation for public and private use, based on the Secretary of Interiors Standards of Preservation.

ELEMENT 6: SERVICES AND FACILITIES (SFG) AND POLICES (SFP)

Rhode Island Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Regulation Act Goal:

To promote orderly growth and development that recognizes the natural characteristics of the land, its suitability for use and the availability of existing and proposed public and/ or private services and facilities.

SFG-1 Upgrade the treatment capacity and technology of the existing Wastewater Treatment system to improve water quality in the Pawtuxet River.

SFP1.1 Continue to monitor plans for expansion of the Scituate Reservoir service area, to ensure that discharges from the Reservoir to the Pawtuxet River are maintained at the levels needed.

SFP1.2 Ensure that sewer pumping stations (capacity and operation) are sufficient for their service areas and meet contemporary environmental standards.

SFG-2 Expand municipal sewerage to areas where service is essential for existing and planned development, while at the same time protecting the system from excessive demands.

SFP-2.1 Explore options for sewer service in areas of existing septic system failure and areas where such extension would promote environmentally sensitive land development practices.

SFP-2.2 Enact regulations to prevent secondary growth impacts from sewer trunk line extensions and to support land use policies of conservation development and open space preservation.

SFP-2.3 Discourage sewer extensions to areas where development can be adequately served by on-site wastewater treatment, in order to avoid undesirable secondary land-use impacts.

SFG-3 Ensure an adequate supply of clean drinking water for all residents of the City.

SFP-3.1 Promote land development practices which will protect the Scituate Reservoir from degradation.

SFP-3.2 Allow for expansion of municipal water services in western Cranston where appropriate. Provision of water services to new areas should be seen as a means to promote conservation development and to preserve open space, but not as a rationale for increased overall density.

SFG-4 Preserve a high quality educational system, with adequate facilities to meet future needs.

SFP-4.1 Promote efficient use of the services and facilities provided by the City's public school system.

1. GOALS AND POLICIES STATEMENT

- SFP-4.2 Where feasible and appropriate, design new or rehabilitated school facilities to incorporate multiple community uses, such as public recreational facilities, branch libraries, and other municipal services and facilities.
- SFG-5 Continue to provide quality safety services (police, fire, rescue, emergency response).**
- SFP-5.1 Maintain adequate service standards for police officers in order to maintain service ratios in proportion to population growth.
- SFP-5.2 Implement changes to the Fire Department as changes in fire facilities occur.
- SFG-6 Continue to provide quality services and programs to meet the needs of Cranston's elderly population.**
- SFP-6.1 Continually monitor elderly service needs reflecting changes in elderly demographics, particularly in the oldest age categories; and provide programs and services to meet those needs.
- SFG-7 Maintain the existing high standards of public library facilities and services.**
- SFP-7.1 Maintain existing high standards of library capital facilities and holdings, in relation to changes in population.
- SFP-7.2 Provide new and expanded branch library facilities as needed to serve the needs to Cranston.
- SFP-7.3 Identify priority areas for program expansion and implement special services for teenagers and the homebound, and improve Internet access.
- SFG-8 Provide sufficient facilities to meet the needs of the City's staff to continue to offer quality municipal services to the residents of Cranston.**
- SFP-8.1 Undertake an overall evaluation of the City's needs for space, in view of new state/federal records management and retention responsibilities and in response to service needs.
- SFP-8.2 Provide regular training programs to maintain City staff proficiency.
- SFG-9 Ensure environmentally appropriate and cost effective solid waste management solutions.**
- SFP-9.1 Work with neighboring municipalities and the State of Rhode Island to pursue alternative approaches to solid waste management.
- SFP-9.2 Bolster recycling efforts to reduce total solid waste disposal costs.
- SFG-10 Redefine water and sewer service policies in Western Cranston to allow expansion and connections where commercial development is desired, but otherwise maintain restrictions against development that would impact valuable natural resources.**
- SFP-10.1 Use sewer and water line connections in western Cranston to promote open space and agricultural preservation.
- SFP-10.2 Determine appropriate locations and types of commercial development that could be supported with sewer service.
- SFP-10.3 Continue to use septic and well systems and low-density zoning to protect surface and ground waters, and public health in western Cranston where utilities do not exist. If funding and fiscal policy constraints are lessened in the future, then it is recommended that these policies be revisited.
- SFG-11 Assess the need for improvements in buildings on an as-needed basis and identify sites for new public amenities.**

1. GOALS AND POLICIES STATEMENT

SFP-11.1 Evaluate the need for a new municipal fire station in the southwestern part of the City.

SFP-11.2 Identify an alternative site for a new, western Cranston branch library in conjunction with the proposal for a village community center.

SFG-12 As a part of ongoing capital programs formulate and implement various improvement programs throughout the City.

SFP-12.1 Create a Pavement Maintenance Plan that programs a regular series of improvements to the street system.

SFP-12.2 Adopt energy conservation standards as a long-term means of lowering energy costs for the City.

SFP-12.3 Continue the municipal signage program to replace signs, under consistent design standards.

SFG-13 Address administrative and management issues related to the process of making physical improvements.

SFP-13.1 Adopt water conservation measures for residential and industrial users to discourage waste and encourage efficient use of the Scituate Reservoir water supply.

SFP-13.2 Establish and maintain a Facilities Maintenance Fund for roadway pavement repairs and upgrades, sidewalks, street trees, signs, snow plowing and energy efficiency in public buildings.

SFG-14 Examine issues requiring further studies and provide allowance for required actions.

SFP-14.1 Determine steps to resolve illegal connections to sewerage system.

SFP-14.2 Develop criteria for priority ranking of capital facilities as part of the City's Capital Improvement Program.

ELEMENT 7: OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION GOALS (OSG) AND POLICES (OSP)

Rhode Island Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Regulation Act Goal:

To promote the preservation of the open spaces and recreational resources of each municipality and the state.

OSG-1 Target specific properties for capital improvements, especially properties to acquire, or otherwise control, along the Historic Scenic Farm Loop and the rivers to create continuous greenways and waterways.

OSP-1.1 Acquire lands along the rivers to ensure access to and protection of these natural resources.

OSP-1.2 Develop programs that will enhance the Farm Loop and promote it on a regional basis.

OSP-1.3 Designate new and expand protection of scenic roads in western Cranston.

OSP-1.4 Continue to invest in the City's Bicycle Network to expand and improve its functionality and quality.

OSG-2 Improve existing facilities and expand active recreation facilities to serve current and projected needs.

OSP-2.1 Continue to upgrade and expand recreational opportunities at existing sites to serve all segments of the population.

OSP-2.2 Improve existing public access to the ponds, lakefronts, riverfronts and Narragansett Bay.

OSP-2.3 Ensure that recreational facilities allow access to people of all ages and are Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant.

1. GOALS AND POLICIES STATEMENT

- OSP-2.4 Acquire or improve public lands for pocket parks with recreational facilities for all ages, in Cranston's urban neighborhoods.
- OSP-2.5 Preserve, through purchase or other means, major open space areas which are subject to development pressures and which serve important environmental functions.
- OSP-2.6 Ensure that parcels dedicated to the City or offered in lieu of impact fees for recreation use, in conjunction with subdivision activity, are linked to maximize their utility.
- OSP-2.7 Develop standards which can be employed to evaluate the adequacy of recreational facilities and open space areas that are available and whether such facilities and areas meet the range of needs of Cranston's different population groups.
- OSP-2.8 Expand the availability of passive recreation at various sites throughout the City. Effort should be made to create passive recreation programs which are coordinated with the Department of Senior Services and specifically designed for Cranston's growing elderly population.
- OSP-2.9 Expand recreation programs and facilities to address unmet or growing needs, including facilities for walking and bicycling.
- OSP-2.10 Adopt a River Corridor Overlay District that creates linear buffers and public access points along the major rivers.
- OSG-3 Undertake administrative and management actions that support recreation and open space programs through partnerships.**
- OSP-3.1 Promote appropriate conservation, stewardship and recreation facilities at State-owned properties at Meshanticut Lake and Curran State Park.
- OSP-3.2 Continue to partner with local and regional non-profits for obtaining and managing open space.
- OSP-3.3 Adopt and encourage use of zoning regulations that support conservation of open space in residential development.
- OSP-3.4 Expand after school recreation programs.
- OSG-4 Maintain the quality of the City's open space and recreation areas while minimizing the tax burden for the costs of maintenance.**
- OSP-4.1 Consider imposing fees for the use of certain facilities. Such fees could be in the form of use costs or concession licensing.
- OSP-4.2 Consider 'adopt-a-park' programs that advertise private resources.
- OSG-5 Examine issues requiring further studies and provide allowance for the required actions.**
- OSP-5.1 Investigate improving water quality in and access to Cranston ponds to increase recreational and natural resource value.
- OSP-5.2 Examine the potential of tourism to support local open space and recreational facilities and programs, similar to the 'Farm Loop.'
- ELEMENT 8: CIRCULATION GOALS (CG) AND POLICIES (CP)**
- Rhode Island Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Regulation Act Goal:**
- To promote a balanced and integrated multi-modal transportation system that provides efficient and economical movement and offers maximum mobility to all.
- CG-1A Improve and maintain an efficient flow of traffic, particularly in commercial centers and along major arterials.**

1. GOALS AND POLICIES STATEMENT

CG-1B Correct existing deficiencies in order to improve safety and reduce congestion throughout the City.

- CP-1.1 Maintain the functional integrity of existing and planned roadways through appropriate land use and design standards.
- CP-1.2 Require interconnection of residential neighborhoods, in order to disperse traffic and provide alternate emergency access routes.
- CP-1.3 Provide adequate capacity on street networks in western Cranston to serve existing and projected development.

CG-2 Provide sufficient off-street parking to serve the needs of businesses and residents.

- CP-2.1 Review, and, where necessary, update off-street parking standards in the Zoning Ordinance to ensure that adequate parking facilities are provided for employees, customers, clients and residents.
- CP-2.2 Consider adopting landscaping standards to protect adjacent residential neighborhoods from adverse impacts from commercial parking areas, and to provide adequate differentiation between parking areas and roadways.
- CP-2.3 Address inadequacy and overspill of parking and increase the number of off-street parking spaces along commercial streets, such as Park Avenue.
- CP-2.4 Require compliance with parking standards in the Zoning Ordinance and discourage on-street parking where appropriate.
- CP-2.5 Encourage off-street parking at existing developments.
- CP-2.6 Encourage shared parking where appropriate.
- CP-2.7 Require the provision of landscaping to delineate parking areas and provide buffers.

- CP-2.8 Restrict on-street parking where feasible to facilitate turning movements and traffic flow.

CG-3 Improve traffic flow along major roadways by reducing and consolidating the number of curb cuts.

- CP-3.1 Restrict access to new development from major arterials.
- CP-3.2 Regulate curb cuts through design standards.
- CP-3.3 Provide left-turn lanes, where feasible, on arterial roadways where curb cuts to new development are unavoidable.
- CP-3.4 Encourage collector driveways to limit the number of access points.

CG-4 Continue traffic calming on residential streets to increase safety by reducing speeding and cut-through traffic and accidents.

- CP-4.1 Prioritize locations with accident problems and continue the program of remedial measures.
- CP-4.2 Give priority to pedestrian safety improvements at key locations.
- CP-4.3 Conduct analysis of local street sign controls in conjunction with east/west access studies.
- CP-4.4 Consider peak period restrictions on particular short-cut routes.

CG-5 Address traffic congestion on the east-west arterials through improving traffic operations.

- CP-5.1 Investigate proposals to improve safety and the flow of traffic on arterials.
- CP-5.2 Reduce or eliminate on-street parking on arterial roadways where appropriate to improve roadway capacity.
- CP-5.3 Enforce on-street parking restrictions.
- CP-5.4 Provide left turn lanes to reduce conflicts at intersections.

1. GOALS AND POLICIES STATEMENT

- CP-5.5 Identify and designate east-west routes for through traffic.
- CP-5.6 Prioritize problems at intersections and investigate improvements.
- CP-5.7 Continue the program for intersection improvements.

CG-6 Plan for and enhance alternative transportation modes.

- CP-6.1 Pursue options for a commuter rail or light rail station and supporting Transit Oriented Development (TOD) in the Elmwood/Wellington Avenues area.
- CP-6.2 Promote and support fixed-route bus services.
- CP-6.3 Make information on public transportation widely available.
- CP-6.4 Secure and preserve railroad rights-of-way for future transportation corridors.
- CP-6.5 Incorporate bicycle access in planning major developments.
- CP-6.6 Support and enhance public transportation and paratransit services.
- CP-6.7 Consider interconnecting rights-of-way between subdivisions for greenways, bikeways, and walking paths.

CG-7 Examine the roadway network for western Cranston and propose specific actions for improving its functional efficiency.

- CP-7.1 Investigate appropriate improvements to eliminate problems of safety and operations.
- CP-7.2 Investigate improvements to roadway segments to support projected development.
- CP-7.3 Undertake detailed study and program of improvements for Pippin Orchard Road/ Hope Road / Phenix Avenue / Wilbur Avenue / Natick Avenue corridor.

- CP-7.4 Plan access to new development to limit access points to collector and arterial roadways. Restrict local streets connections to collector roads where possible.
- CP-7.5 Establish a program of improvements to specific roadway segments and intersections based on identified problems.

CG-8 Further develop bike paths to create a cross-city bicycle corridor.

- CP-8.1 Opportunities to develop additional and connected bicycle paths along public rights-of-way should be investigated, particularly the Pontiac Secondary, the Elmwood Spur and the Providence Water Supply Board viaduct.
- CP-8.2 Opportunities to develop additional and connected bicycle paths among private properties with connections to public rights-of-way should be investigated.



Introduction to the Land Use Plan Element

The Land Use Plan element is the most important element of a Comprehensive Plan. It lays out the key strategies and policies to maintain, protect, develop, improve, and focus growth in the City. The Land Use element is also a link to the other elements of the Plan, thereby providing a complete growth management policy for the City. The most common way to implement these policies will be zoning amendments, but there will be other actions needed to accomplish these goals. Although broad in scope, the Land Use Plan element has been guided by several key challenges and strategies.

Key Challenges

Cranston's land use practices and policies to manage growth must continue to be programmed to respond to changing markets and patterns of development. Over the past ten years, moderate residential growth in western Cranston, reuse of the State land at the Pastore Center, and new development in both industrial parks and other large land parcels have required adjustments to the City's land use policies. Challenges for the future include:

Differentiating Neighborhoods

The City has new residential development and has preserved more open space in western Cranston, while large and small redevelopment projects are occurring in eastern Cranston. Neighborhoods are being formed in western Cranston, while neighborhoods are reaffirming themselves in the East. This Plan proposes to recognize those differences with varying approaches to growth management while protecting existing neighborhoods.

Regional Centers and Village Centers

Cranston was developed historically as a 'city of villages', but commercial development in the City has become more diverse. Garden City and the surrounding area along Sockanosset Crossroad has become a major regional commercial center. However, the historic

village centers are finding a separate commercial, civic and social niche. Some of these smaller commercial centers still need incentives that will allow businesses to flourish and establish a quality image for the neighborhood. There are opportunities to improve these areas with mixed-use and infill developments, neighborhood open spaces, streetscape improvements, and zoning changes.

Build An Even Better Cranston

Neither western nor eastern Cranston has been 'built out' according to current zoning regulations. There are many opportunities for new residential development in western Cranston as well as redevelopment and infill opportunities in eastern Cranston, based on recent land use data. Guidelines for development will protect community character and channel development potential in ways that will maintain the local environment and quality of life.

Walking, Biking, Driving, and Public Transit

Accessibility is a key to making any land use changes. Providing safe and efficient options for travel for everyone will improve socio-economic bonds across the community as well as promote the type of land development that best serves Cranston. Better access across the City and to the region will protect the environment and reduce traffic frustration.

Key Strategies

This Plan recommends the following key land use strategies:

Apply "Smart Growth" Policies

Among other strategies, Smart Growth policies:

- promote development in already built areas
- emphasize a mix of uses

2. LAND USE PLAN

- reduce development of open space
- support transit improvements and transit-oriented development
- promote land use practices that reduce sprawl and improve the quality of neighborhoods and village centers.

Implementation of these policies in Cranston is recommended as a means to improve the overall quality of life.

Enhance Western Cranston

Creating traditional village centers can accommodate future growth and demand, requiring conservation design for new subdivisions can allow development while minimizing loss of open space, and preserving and enhancing the historic landscape will reinforce western Cranston's early agrarian history. Public services within a village center could address the needs of residents and provide a focus for other local services. A cultural center could be added on city land with references to the history of agriculture in the region.

Provide Opportunities in Eastern Cranston

Underutilized properties and infill development sites could be improved to address current and future land use, transportation, and economic needs in the eastern part of the City. Older or abandoned industrial areas such as the former Trolley Barn site, the Ciba Geigy property and the industrial land adjacent to the Northeast Corridor Railway, are all locations that could change for the better with proper planning.

Link Land Uses

Existing playgrounds, parks, open space resources, and protected areas could be linked to provide easier access between them. Stream corridors could be protected to preserve water resources, reduce flood hazards and provide additional pedestrian access. With both minor and major changes to the City road system, traffic flow could be improved throughout the City. Finally, because a regional commuter rail corridor is being developed, the City could plan for mass transit options to support goals of lessening traffic congestion and improving the built environment.

Encourage Neighborhood and Village Re-investment

The zoning requirements for lot sizes within some of the older neighborhoods no longer reflect the prevailing smaller lot sizes. This renders an unusually large percentage of houses as "non-conforming"

and requires homeowners to seek approval of the Zoning Board for even modest improvements. Matching zoning requirements more closely to the existing uses on the ground will encourage maintenance and reinvestment in the neighborhoods. In addition, after applying the proper design guidelines for new commercial development, new businesses and infill development within village centers could be encouraged with a streamlined permitting process.



Part I. Summary and Accomplishments of the 1992 Plan

Introduction

This section summarizes the corresponding 1992 Land Use Plan element. The 1992 element focused on four general areas:

- Planning for future development in western Cranston;
- Citywide standards and policies for commercial development;
- Redevelopment opportunities at key parcels;
- Resolving inconsistencies between zoning and actual land use.

Planning for Future Development

The 1992 Plan identified strategies to prevent commercial strip development and to direct new projects to developed areas in western Cranston. The purpose of these strategies was to balance the Comprehensive Plan's goals and policies related to housing, economic development, natural resources, open space, and public services and facilities. Rather than encouraging large, single-use residential districts and controlling average development density, the 1992 Plan promoted residential development with appropriate siting of other land uses that preserve the character and quality of the environment.

A Strategy for Balanced Growth in Western Cranston

A build-out analysis of Western Cranston revealed that at the then current building trends coupled with existing land use policies, would result in the consumption of large amounts of land for residential development, changes the area from rural to suburban character, and result in considerable loss of natural habitat.

The 1992 Plan recommended three strategies to promote compact development in western Cranston:

Promote development of a village center as a focus of community life that includes public facilities, some commercial services, and higher density residential uses;

- Promote cluster development in lower density residential projects to minimize infrastructure costs and preserve open space;
- Strengthen controls on non-industrial development in industrial areas while still providing for limited commercial services for on-site industries.

The 1992 Plan identified a goal of protecting at least 20% of land in western Cranston (exclusive of the wetlands) in large tracts of open space through purchases and policies that promoted concentrating development in a village center, clustering in residential subdivisions, and farm preservation.

A Western Cranston Village Center

Several preferred locations were identified for a village center within western Cranston. Key components of a successful village center were identified, including access to major collector roads, design to encourage pedestrian movement, and a mix of community and service uses that support the surrounding neighborhoods.

The 1992 Plan recommended that development standards be formulated for private, public and civic uses in order to achieve appropriate scale, density and mix of uses in the village center. Two basic types of development standards were recommended:

- Standards for the development as a whole.
- Standards for individual sites.

2. LAND USE PLAN

Implementation mechanisms for promoting a village center were suggested, including overlay districts and implementing a variation of the existing Mixed-Use Planned District ordinance. To encourage development proposals that would contribute to the creation of a successful village center, the 1992 Plan recommended changes to the review and approval procedures for village centers. A by-right approach was recommended as a means of encouraging potential developers to propose appropriate village development.

Several areas were recommended as potential village centers. The intersection of Scituate Avenue and Pippin Orchard Road was considered a prime location because of the church and developable land surrounding the intersection. The intersection of Natick Avenue and Phenix Avenue was identified as a second location because of its public resources and excellent transportation access. Another, although less favorable, site was the intersection of Scituate Avenue and Comstock Parkway.

Western Cranston's Arterials

Special attention was given to the largest arterials bounding western Cranston: Plainfield Pike, and Natick Avenue and Route 37.

Plainfield Pike

As a regional arterial, Plainfield Pike was a focus of economic development policies. Strip commercial development, similar to what was emerging on the Johnston side, was specifically discouraged.

Western Industrial Development

Key recommendations to promote economic development of the industrial area west of I-295 were:

- Rezone the small pockets of residential zoned land in the industrial areas to an industrial zone;
- Strengthen the zoning regulations governing M-1 and M-2 districts to ensure that industrial areas are not fragmented by incompatible uses. Suggested strategies included creating a new zoning designation specifically for the Plainfield Pike and Howard Industrial Park areas and enacting a Planned Unit Development (PUD) ordinance;
- Coordinate with the Town of Johnston to ensure that future development of the commercial zoned land north of the road

reinforces the image and function of the Plainfield Pike to the benefit of both communities.

Eastern Commercial Development

Key recommendations to promote economic development of the commercial areas east of I-295 were:

- Establish a new Office Park District in the zoning ordinance by modifying the Commercial C-2 regulations to include requirements for increased minimum lot areas, lower site coverage, appropriate landscaping standards, and provision of buffers at property boundaries.
- Strengthen controls on high impact uses, and increase application of signage, parking, and landscaping regulations.

Natick Avenue and Route 37

Key recommendations for the area extending from the Route 37 terminus on Natick Avenue northwards along Natick and Phenix Avenues to the I-295 overpass were:

- A potential limited neighborhood commercial or village district to the east of Natick Avenue at the base of the relocated Phenix Avenue to provide convenience services oriented toward the existing pass-by traffic rather than high trip generating uses. It was recommended that a new zoning ordinance be implemented to limit allowable floor space, types of permitted uses, and identify a clear set of building and site design criteria;
- Review the existing zoning for the Gammino (now Keating) gravel extraction operation as a potential light industrial park, office park, or modest commercial center provided that appropriate access to Route 37 could be made available;
- Create designated areas for office development with well-defined standards.

Commercial Development Standards and Policies

The key issues identified in the 1992 Plan for the major commercial corridors were: conflicts between through and local traffic, aesthetic concerns, and incompatible land uses in residential neighborhoods.

2. LAND USE PLAN

Both regulatory and non-regulatory measures were suggested to address these issues. Regulatory approaches within the 1992 Plan suggested changing the use and dimensional regulations of zoning districts, improving the process of development review, and mandating that developers participate in the cost of mitigating their impacts on public systems and facilities. Non-regulatory approaches included focused studies of specific corridors to identify preferred uses and circulation issues, and improved standards for roadway design to guide public investment in rehabilitation and reconstruction.

Regulatory Strategies

The land use strategy for improving commercial development along the major arterials consisted of four parts:

- Review and adjust zoning district boundaries along the major arterials to provide for adequate commercial services while minimizing impacts on adjacent residential neighborhoods;
- Establish new and improved site design standards;
- Institute expanded development review procedures;
- Adopt formalized mechanisms for development impact mitigation.

Site Development Standards

The 1992 Plan identified several deficiencies in the zoning regulations in terms of site development standards, including landscaping, parking lot screening, scale and location of signage, and driveway spacing and location. To encourage new development that achieves the design objectives identified in the site development standards and to improve the quality of commercial development along the City's major arterials, there were several recommendations:

- The City should expand site development standards to apply to most types of commercial and industrial uses.
- Development bonuses should be tied to specific performance criteria such as the amount of landscaping and the quality of on-site amenities.

Site Plan Review Procedures

The key recommendation for site plan review was to require a standardized review process for:

- All nonresidential developments that could have a significant impact on the surrounding area, and
- Any development that exceeds specific thresholds relating to potential impacts on traffic, adjacent neighborhoods, historic structures, and open space.

Development Impact Mitigation

In order to offset the costs on municipal services and infrastructure resulting from commercial and industrial development, a formal procedure was recommended to incorporate impact mitigation into the development review process. Methods of mitigation recommended ranged from an impact fee based on a detailed analysis to a less complicated approach of requiring a contribution for off-site improvements.

Commercial Corridor Design Strategies

The 1992 Plan identified several aesthetic, traffic and siting deficiencies associated with many of Cranston's major commercial arterials. The recommended approach to address the problems involved a partnership between the City and the State through a combination of regulatory measures and specific improvements. Recommendations to improve the commercial arterials included redesigning the roadways and modifying the zoning regulations to limit commercial setbacks, prohibit tall and internally lit signs, require rear and side parking, and require fencing and landscaping buffers to abutting residential neighborhoods.

Three existing corridor segments in Cranston were presented as case studies to illustrate how the recommended land use and urban design principles will improve the commercial areas.

Community Commercial Centers

The 1992 Plan noted that there are few community commercial centers in Cranston that fit the definition of small concentrations of buildings that house a mix of retail, office, services, and institutional uses linked by pedestrian circulation paths. Four village centers were identified: Pawtuxet Village, Knightsville, Rolfe Square, and Garden City. The pivotal role of careful, strategic public investment was highlighted as the most effective means of creating strong commercial centers in Cranston, by both strengthening existing centers and focusing on certain new locations.

Redevelopment Opportunities

Three major redevelopment opportunities were identified in the 1992 Plan. As the intervening years have proven, these were appropriate sites to consider.

Fields Point Redevelopment

A key recommendation for this area was to rezone the Fields Point area for business uses compatible with the future mixed-use development identified in the Providence Comprehensive Plan. Furthermore, it was recommended that the “cooperative planning area” in Fields Point, as suggested in the Providence Comprehensive Plan, should be adopted and the two Cities jointly establish a Fields Point Redevelopment Authority to guide future development of this area.

Narragansett Brewery Redevelopment

The strategic location of the Narragansett Brewery site between existing commercial, industrial and residential areas meant that redevelopment of this site could play an important role in the Cranston Street corridor revitalization process. The site’s location and on-site features made it an ideal mixed use redevelopment opportunity to include such uses as light industrial, commercial, research and development, institutional and residential uses.

State Facilities at Howard (now called Pastore Center)

The recommended strategy for the Howard (Pastore) Reservation included:

- Promoting appropriate commercial development intensity at the Training School site;
- Restricting development at the “Cornfields” site to only economic development options that include buffers to the nearby residential neighborhoods. [The Comprehensive Plan was amended in 1998 after the State sold the site to a private developer.];
- Utilizing five or six sites for office development, including on land donated by the City;
- Containing future expansion of State facilities to the area bounded by East Street/ Pontiac Avenue, Route 37, and Route 2 (New London Avenue).

It was recommended that the Howard area be integrated into the City’s zoning ordinance and map. The key changes recommended included the following:

- Designate the Training School site for Office Park development with appropriate standards for parking, landscaping and other site amenities;
- Rezone the buildings along Pontiac Avenue for office uses;
- Rezone the remaining land identified in the Land Use Plan as State institutional purposes to a new State Facilities or Institutional district to ensure consistency between the State and Cranston’s goals and policies for the Howard Reservation.

One controversial recommendation of the 1992 Plan was to put a limit on the institutionalized population of the Center. This restriction was considered unacceptable by the State for inclusion in the Comprehensive Plan. If the State proceeds to redevelop the property for State office and other commercial uses or proceeds with the master planning process proposed in the State Department of Administration’s 1994 Howard Center Master Plan, and the State includes the City in the planning and redevelopment process then many of the previous concerns could be addressed.

Resolution of Zoning and Land Use Inconsistencies

Inconsistencies between zoning and land uses were identified particularly in the older developed areas of the City and strategies for resolving these inconsistencies were recommended. The areas identified for specific rezoning were:

- Commercial zone (C-3) in Pawtuxet Village south of Ocean Avenue;
- Warwick Avenue, between Broad Street and Park Avenue;
- Park Avenue, between Community Drive and Park View Junior High School;
- Elmwood Avenue, between Park Avenue and the Pawtuxet River (Warwick City line);
- Budlong Manufacturing (Pontiac Avenue, Arthur Street, Magnolia Street, and Belmont Road);

2. LAND USE PLAN

- Park Avenue at Budlong Road and Dyer Avenue, with extension south along Washington Secondary railroad line;
- Macklin Street industrial district;
- Cranston Street, between Route 10 and Puritan Avenue;
- Atwood Avenue, between Fletcher Avenue and Randall Street;
- Richard Street (westerly side);
- Route 2 and Bald Hill Road.

Future Land Use Map

The 1992 Plan highlighted the integral role of the Future Land Use Map (Figure 2.1) in setting forth the recommended development pattern for Cranston and how the City's regulatory policies will be adjusted to affect this development. Key strategies illustrated in the Future Land Use Map were:

- Compact development: identification of two potential locations "village centers" in western Cranston;
- Residential development: Maintenance of overall existing residential densities in western Cranston;
- Open space preservation: Delineation of open space corridors along rivers and streams, and designation of the "Cornfields" area for open space and recreation;
- Industrial development: Consolidation of industrial zoning districts along Plainfield Pike, west of I-295;
- Commercial Development: Establishment of Office Park districts along Plainfield Pike (east of I-295) and at the Training School property, and establishment of a mixed-use area at Fields Point;
- Land Use/ Zoning Inconsistencies: Rezoning of commercial and industrial areas in Pawtuxet Village and on Warwick Avenue, Elmwood Avenue, Park Avenue, Dyer Avenue, Cranston Street, Atwood Avenue, and Bald Hill Road.

Changes or Additions to the Plan since 1992

The Cranston City Council approved the following key changes to the Land Use Element of the 1992 Comprehensive Plan:

- Amendment of the Plan goals and uses for the Pastore Center (Boys Training School) from appropriately scaled, low-traffic volume, corporate headquarters, R & D campus or office development to mixed office and retail development, and multifamily residential uses.
- New opportunity for economic development on the "Cornfields" site and separation of that from actions on the Boy's Training School.
- Amendment of the Plan to identify the Narragansett Brewery as a Special Redevelopment Area to allow the commercial center project that is largely complete.

1992 Plan Actions and Accomplishments

Table 2-1 summarizes the Land Use Plan Actions from the 1992 Comprehensive Plan and identifies which of these have been accomplished.

Table 2-1. Accomplishments of the 1992 Comprehensive Plan

Action	1992 Actions	Accomplishments and Changes
Growth Management in Western Cranston		
LU-1	Revise existing cluster (Residential Planned District) regulations to more appropriately promote the use of this land development technique.	This action was not accomplished.
LU-2	Amend subdivision regulations to promote land development patterns that minimize site disturbance, minimize visual impacts, and retain rural features.	New definitions were created for “unsuitable land” and for open space in cluster developments. Map requirements were added for existing conditions.
LU-3	Identify areas of special natural resource significance for guidance in subdivision planning and review, in order to ensure the preservation of major contiguous parcels and corridors.	The Planning Department created GIS maps of the City based on special aerial photography. Wetland maps were also updated.
LU-4	Increase minimum lot area outside the Village Center to five (5) acres, unless developed as cluster subdivisions.	This action was not accomplished.
LU-5	Designate an area for development of a compact village center to serve western Cranston, and establish standards and criteria for development within this district.	This area was shown on a land use map. No other additional studies have been conducted.
LU-6	Consider conservation restriction or less-than-fee acquisition programs to limit the ultimate development potential of valuable parcels, in return for permanent reductions in tax liabilities.	This action was not accomplished.
Commercial Development		
LU-7	Adopt/revise design standards for major commercial development addressing issues such as lighting, internal circulation, access and relation to the adjacent street system, utilities, landscaping and buffers, etc.	Site design standards for commercial development were adopted.
LU-8	Adopt a Site Plan Review ordinance applicable to (a) all special permits, and (b) all developments meeting specified thresholds.	Adopted site plan review ordinance in September 1998.
LU-9	Amend the City's sign regulations, to adjust the area of signage to the scale of the parcel or development, to reduce total sign areas, and to control the location of signage with respect to the street.	Adopted new sign regulations in 1998. These regulations were revised in 2000.
LU-10	Consider development impact standards to ensure that new development contributes adequately and proportionately to the costs of improvements required by such development.	There were no changes in impact fees. The Western Cranston Watershed District was added in 1998.
LU-11	Identify and prioritize commercial corridor segments for study, in order to provide guidance for appropriate regulatory changes and City economic development efforts such as marketing and financing programs. Conduct analyses of specific development objectives, preferred commercial uses, circulation and safety improvements, and potential linkages among parcels.	Cranston Street corridor was prioritized in 2000.
LU-12	Create an Office Park zoning district, to be applied to areas currently used or zoned for office use and to additional sites as appropriate.	This action was not accomplished.

2. LAND USE PLAN

LU-13	Provide a commercial development option in industrial area through a planned unit development (PUD) option or through establishment of a new industrial Park zoning district.	This action was accomplished with a PUD option in the Mixed-use Planned District (MPD) regulations.
LU-14	Revise zoning districts along Plainfield Pike to eliminate incompatible land uses and consolidate the industrial zoning of the area.	This action was not accomplished.
Fields Point Redevelopment		
LU-15	Rezone Fields Point from General Industry (M-2) to a new district consistent with the adjacent Waterfront Mixed-use District in Providence, as and interim zoning district during the preparation of an area redevelopment plan and subsequent development of new zoning regulations.	This action was not done, however, this areas is currently under study by Johnson & Wales.
LU-16	Establish a Fields Point Redevelopment Authority, with participation by both Providence and Cranston, to guide the redevelopment of the Fields Point area in a consistent and harmonious manner.	This action was not accomplished.
Narragansett Brewery Redevelopment		
LU-17	Continue efforts to implement a mixed-use development for the Brewery site.	The area was rezoned to C4. A plan for the area was approved in 2001 and development is 80% complete. The Trolley Barn has been demolished.
State Facilities at Howard		
LU-18	Create an Institution zoning district to be applied to the developed area of the Howard complex, in place of the existing Open Space (S-1) district.	This action was not accomplished.
LU-19	Establish redevelopment standards and guidelines for the Training School site that may be applied through designation of the site as a Mixed-Use Planned District (MPD), or a new Office Park district.	This area was zoned as MPD in 1998, which was subsequently revised in 2002.
LU-20	Maintain existing Open Space (S-1) zoning for the "Cornfields" site, and seek to negotiate permanent recreation uses of this site in connection with disposition and redevelopment of the Training School site.	The zoning for this area was revised in 1998 to Mixed-use Planned District (MPD). The Comprehensive Plan was amended in 1998 after the State sold the site to a private developer. A recreation-oriented commercial project has since been constructed (Mulligan's Island)
Land Use / Zoning Consistency		
LU-21	Amend Zoning Map and Zoning Ordinance to eliminate major inconsistencies between land use and zoning in the following areas: 1. Warwick Avenue, 2. Elmwood Avenue, 3. Park Avenue, 4. Cranston Street, 5. Atwood Avenue, 6. Route 2 and Bald Hill Road.	The zoning map was amended for the following areas: sections of Atwood Avenue and Pontiac Avenue. No changes to the remaining areas were made.



Part II. Current Conditions and Issue

Introduction

This section provides a summary of the existing conditions, major changes since the 1992 Plan, and key issues regarding the land uses and land use regulations within the City. Potential strategies and actions to address these issues are presented in the next section. The purpose of this section is to define future land uses and land use policies that support the overall vision and goals of this Plan.

Existing Conditions and Issues

The Land Use Element considers the varied conditions and issues that need to be addressed through the actions of this and the other elements in the Comprehensive Plan. Many issues were discussed during the planning process and are explained below, along with existing land use conditions. They reflect the trends in land use, changes since the previous plan, and issues that need to be addressed.

Land Use Patterns in Cranston

The City is faced with a distinct east/west split in land use patterns: residential development and preservation of open space in western Cranston vs. redevelopment and improvement of existing neighborhood and commercial centers in eastern Cranston.

Landscape Character

In western Cranston, a key issue is the protection of the landscape character. This issue is directly related to the retention of open space for recreation as well as protecting the remaining natural resources in western Cranston, including good quality agricultural land. An issue that should be addressed by the City is the protection of viewsheds, particularly in western Cranston.

Village and Neighborhood Centers

The village and neighborhood centers in many parts of Cranston need to maintain their character and economic vitality. The pedestrian environment and the overall condition for some small commercial neighborhoods could be improved. There are also opportunities to improve these areas with mixed-use developments, neighborhood open spaces, streetscape, and zoning changes.

Zoning

A6, B1 and B2 Zoning Districts - Most properties in the A6, B1 and B2 zoning districts have less than the 6,000 square feet minimum lot size. In fact, about half (over 48 % and 55% of the A6 and B1 zones, respectively), are less than 5,000 square feet in area. This inconsistency between the lot sizes and zoning occurs typically in the older parts of the City, which limits development potential, and requires variances for changes to existing properties. However, the City grants variances routinely when properties are 5,000 square feet, limiting the purpose and effectiveness of the existing minimum size requirements. The City needs to address this issue and consider changing regulations to reflect the higher density in these areas, which are essentially built out and have an older housing stock.

Plainfield Pike

Land uses along Plainfield Pike have become increasingly auto-oriented, creating a “strip mall” character. The City needs to coordinate with the adjacent Town of Johnston and implement zoning changes for this section of Cranston to halt this land use trend. If this coordination is not possible, the City should still recognize that strip commercial development is not the best possible land use. The City should maintain the higher standards and encourage the real estate market value to increase with new development.

Commercial Development Opportunities on Built and Vacant Land

There are several key parcels and properties throughout Cranston that can accommodate further development. The development of these properties could offer multiple benefits that include improved access, significant property upgrades, and the potential to improve the surrounding area. Properties include the former trolley barn site on Cranston Street near Route 10, the Armed Forces Reserve Center at Fields Point that is currently planned for closure under the federal Base Realignment and Closure process (see discussion below), and several parcels in the Pastore Center. In addition, there are parts of the former Ciba-Geigy property, which could provide commercial and industrial opportunities. The development potential is explained in the recommendations section for these areas.

Base Realignment and Closure

The Base Realignment and Closure process (BRAC) is a federally mandated process to dispose of excess military properties. Congress authorizes the BRAC process and the most recent BRAC process is currently underway. A unique aspect of the BRAC process is that it puts the local communities with the disposed military properties in control of the reuse of the properties with the express goal of economic redevelopment to replace the loss of the former military activity. The Fields Point Reserve Center, which covers 11 acres, includes a building of 69,000 square feet, and offers commanding views down Narragansett Bay, has been designated for closure under the current BRAC process. The City has an opportunity to lead the planning process for economic development at the property. It is recommended that this planning effort should also be coordinated with state agencies such as the RIEDC.

Mixed Use and Transit Oriented Development Opportunities

Amtrak's Northeast Corridor railroad line runs through an industrial area and rail yard between Elmwood Avenue and Wellington Avenue. This rail line is part of the system being considered by RIDOT for commuter rail service running eventually from Westerly to Providence. Some of the industrial properties in the area are underutilized, or at least capable of further development, and the rail yard is mostly open land. This situation provides a unique opportunity for not just new commercial development but mixed-use development that may be able to take advantage of the projected

future commuter rail service. By combining commercial and residential uses together at a site with future public transit, the project will be able to reduce vehicle traffic on local roads while increasing the tax base substantially.

Sewer Connections and Growth in Western Cranston

The development of western Cranston was discussed extensively in the 1992 Plan. The key issue related to the amount and type of residential development remains. The recently installed Florida Power and Light (FPLE) force main in Pippin Orchard Road is designed to allow for some adjacent residential sewer connections. This may have particular significance for the proposed village center area at Pippin Orchard and Scituate Avenue as well as additional residential development.

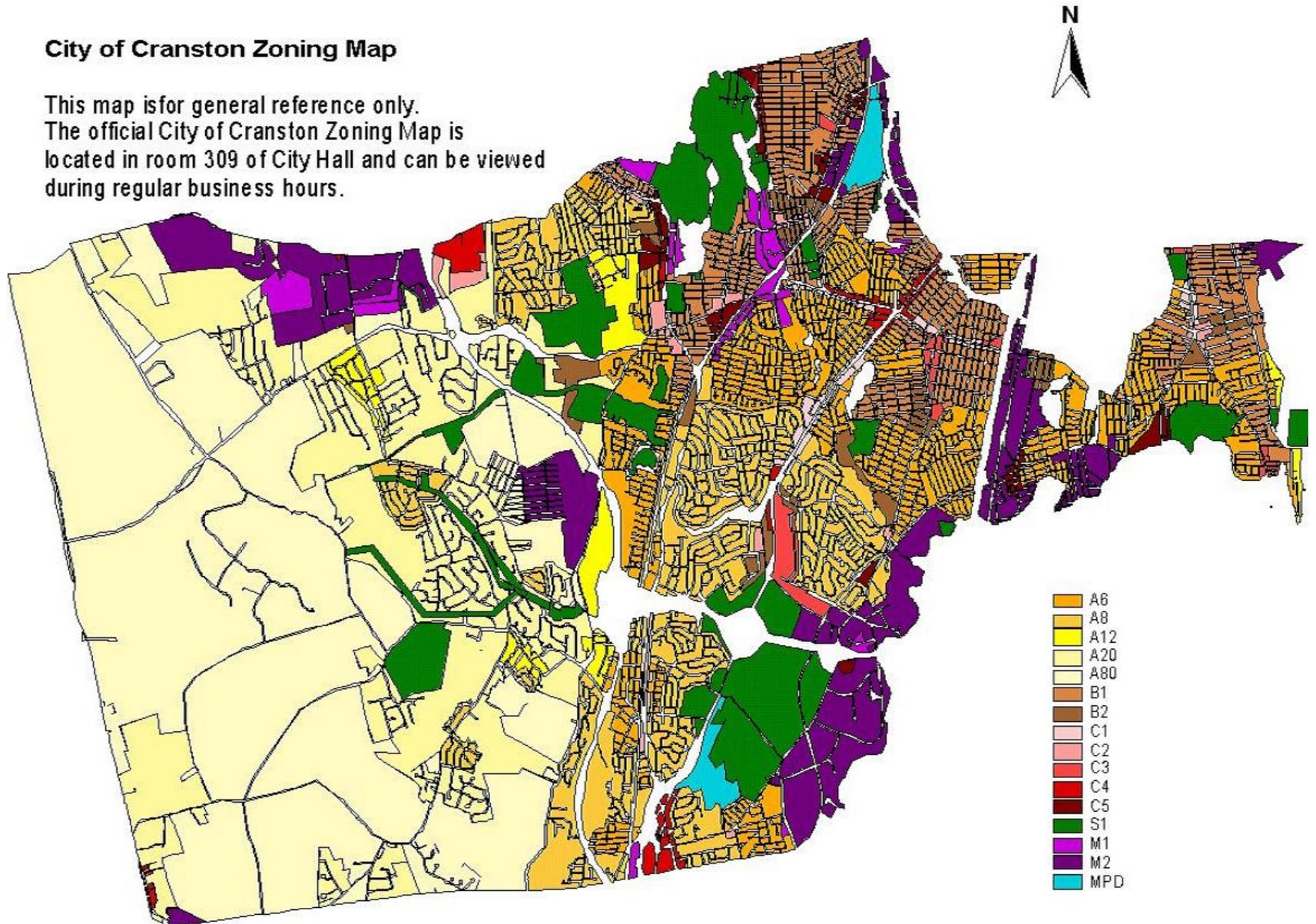
Linking Open Space, Recreation, and Natural Resources

The City has an excellent supply of open space, historic, and natural resources and their use has increased over the past ten years. This trend is anticipated to continue into the future. People are jogging, walking, and riding bicycles and enjoying active and passive recreational activities. To meet this demand, preserve open space, retain critical habitat, and allow users to enjoy the scenic and historic assets of the community, the City should link these areas. This could occur through land acquisition, designated routes, or other programs or policies that allow people to find ways and paths between all of these resources.

Figure 2.2 City Zoning Map

City of Cranston Zoning Map

This map is for general reference only. The official City of Cranston Zoning Map is located in room 309 of City Hall and can be viewed during regular business hours.





Part III. Strategies and Actions

This section provides the concepts, strategies, and actions that will help resolve the issues identified in the previous section of the Land Use Plan element.

Land Use Principles

During the comprehensive planning process, it was determined that there were common themes among many of the ideas, suggestions, and issues regarding land use that also affected the other elements. These themes support the following land use principles and provide a basis for actions proposed in this plan.

Principle 1: Direct future commercial, industrial and mixed-use development with two approaches:

- Adopt smart growth principles for new development that maintain the best qualities of Cranston;
- Focus efforts on a few key redevelopment sites by encouraging smart growth to increase the value and job potential from each site and increase the mix and density of uses.

Principle 2: Apply design guidelines for commercial corridors and initiate streetscape improvements in the village centers to support development and improve the overall image of these areas.

The City should adopt design and signage guidelines along commercial corridors, such as Reservoir Avenue, Park Avenue, Elmwood Avenue, Atwood Avenue, and Oaklawn Avenue to improve the attractiveness and quality of the businesses. Streetscape improvements and better signage in the village centers would also improve the attractiveness, pedestrian access, and overall image of

these areas. One such project, Pawtuxet Village, has recently been completed.

Principle 3: Make the City an active partner in decisions relating to the redevelopment of the Pastore Center in order to maximize the benefits to the State and the City.

The expansion of the state facility should be focused on office and service uses and not residential structures. Private development that complements the current institutional activities should be allowed to occur at the edges of the state property, and take advantage of its central location, the opportunity to renovate, and reuse the underutilized state-owned buildings.

Principle 4: Protect and stabilize existing residential neighborhoods by basing land use decisions on neighborhood needs and quality of life.

Protect the natural, historic and visual resources that define the neighborhoods. In addition, support the existing residential development patterns in order to stabilize the residential blocks and neighborhoods.

Principle 5: Support new development and connect existing land uses by:

- Creating additional links within the City through acquisitions and easements that will preserve open space, protect valuable resources, increase recreational activity, and improve pedestrian and bicycle connections throughout the community;
- Improving open space links along continuous corridors with pedestrian, bicycle and emergency connections throughout the City.

- Developing additional public transit options to connect people, jobs, and services.

Principle 6: Tailor new public and private development towards recognizing and preserving the City’s heritage.

Regulate new residential development in western Cranston to ensure the City’s valuable natural settings and landscapes remain. New commercial development in eastern Cranston shall be required to identify how historic structures will be preserved to reflect the City’s past.

Implementation Approach

The following approaches describe ways in which these principles should be implemented.

Smart Growth

Adopt smart growth principles for new development that maintain the best qualities of Cranston.

The idea of smart growth has been well received in many areas across the country. In cities that have utilized smart growth, they have realized the benefits of development while minimizing impacts.

The City’s previous approaches to improving the quality of development have been through regulatory actions. The City could use market-based regulations such as allowing mixed-use developments as incentives to support the local economy and improve the utilization of land, and city resources and services. New development could be designed to meet the needs of the community for increased tax base, new services, and civic uses, if incentives are given to the new projects by opening up new opportunities that conform to public standards and market realities. The existing MPD (mixed use planned district) zone could be modified to accomplish these changes.

Applying a smart growth agenda to development and redevelopment in Cranston will provide many benefits. However, a first step is to determine how smart growth should be defined and how the smart growth strategies can be tailored to the needs of Cranston. Smart growth could include the following strategies:

- Encourage compact development for buildings, building groups, and residential subdivisions;
- Improve walkability throughout the city;
- Create distinctive and attractive villages that identify neighborhoods;
- Preserve open space and farmland and other natural qualities of the land;
- Provide options for moving more easily through the city; and
- Make the process for development approval more predictable and less time consuming.

Smart Growth Districts

To promote the concept in Cranston, three district types could be proposed to accommodate smart growth development in key locations (Future MPD zones will be identified and zoned through the zoning process as defined in the City’s zoning ordinance):

Mixed-use Planned Development – Low Intensity (MPD-L)

This mixed-use zone would be suited for townhouses, with some first floor retail (up to 20%), and 35’-40’ building heights. It would be suitable for transition areas and best when adjacent to public transportation. It is also appropriate to maintain open space areas as part of conservation efforts.



Example MPD-L

Mixed-use Planned Development – Medium Intensity (MPD-M)

This mixed-use zone would be suited for a retail district with commercial and residential on upper floors and with a minimum of two stories. Suitable for revitalizing and expanding village centers when adjacent to public transportation. Building heights are 35' - 40'.



Example MPD-M

Mixed-use Planned Development – High Intensity (MPD-H)

This mixed-use zone would be suited for predominantly mixed commercial development, with live/work space or artists' lofts, and 45'-50' building heights. It would also be suitable for encouraging significant redevelopment, and improved when it is adjacent to public transportation.

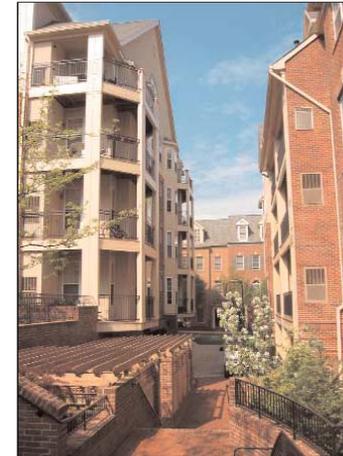
It should be noted that current City ordinances limit building height to 35' except in Mixed Use Planned Districts, where City Council has discretion to go higher.

Key Development Parcels

Focus efforts on a few key redevelopment sites by encouraging smart growth, increasing the value and job potential from each site, and increasing the mix and density of uses.

Potential locations for development that could initiate other improvements and economic development in the City include the Wellington/Elmwood Avenues area, intersection of Phenix and

Route 37, and Pippin Orchard Road and the Scituate Avenue intersection, and the Cranston Printworks.



Example MPD-H

Illustrative Plans

Two key areas for new mixed-use development would support the increase and potential demand for services in Cranston. Each of these areas has characteristics that could support this type of development:

- They are near or along main access routes to the residential areas,
- They would help meet the expected increase in demand for services as residential development continues, and
- This development would provide substantial improvement to the local tax base.

To illustrate possible development in these areas two key areas were examined to show the relationships of the building footprints, access, and density of potential mixed-use developments. Two mixed-use illustrative options are highlighted:

- Wellington and Elmwood Avenues – Transit Oriented Development;

- Intersection of Phenix Avenue and Route 37 – Village Center.

The scenarios described below are not meant to be the only option for development of the sites, but indicate the type of project that could be successful under the goals and objectives of this Plan.



Figure 2-2. Wellington and Elmwood Avenues - TOD Option

Light colored circles show ¼ and ½ mile walking distances, light colored arrows show options for existing and new pedestrian/bike connections

Wellington and Elmwood Avenues – Transit Oriented Development

The transit oriented development (TOD) in the Elmwood/Wellington Avenues area is proposed around a commuter rail stop and would have a much higher density compared to the surrounding industrial development. The density is designed to take advantage of its proximity to a transit hub (see Figure 2-2). A parking garage located in the center above the station could provide parking for the commuters as well as to serve the retail uses located within the TOD. Parking is also provided in each of the mixed-use blocks on the first floor in combination with retail. Office space and residential units are proposed on the upper floors.

The development is structured around a pedestrian mall which would connect the train station to an open space amenity anchored by a water body at the eastern edge of the site. At the end of the mall is a building that supports community facilities for the residents and the people transiting through the area. New bridge access is proposed across I-95, to link the neighborhood with the school and playing field on the western edge of the site to the proposed development on the eastern side.

- Commuter Station [Rail and Bus]
 - Station and Garage Floor Plate – 105,000 sf.
 - Estimated building height – 40 feet or 3 stories (could increase to reduce footprint)
- Western Parcel
 - Estimated Floor Plate for first floor - 216,000 sf.
 - Estimated Ground Floor Retail - 100,000 sf.
 - Estimated Office - 200,000 s.f.
 - Estimated number of housing units - 220
 - Estimated building height - 60 feet or 5 stories
- Eastern Parcel
 - Retail - 180,000 sf
 - Estimated Office - 180,000 sf
 - Estimated number of housing units - 330
 - Estimated building height - 60 feet or 5 stories
 - Community Facility (single story) - 10,000 square feet

Phenix Avenue and Route 37 – Village Center Layout (Option 1)

As proposed in this concept, the village center proposed along Phenix Avenue near Route 37 consists of mixed-use buildings with retail on the ground floor and residences above (see Figure 2-3). An alternate access is provided through the development to the ice rink located to the northern edge of the site. Parking for the retail is provided in a lot buffered from the street, while the residential parking is located behind the residential buildings along the eastern edge of the site.

- Retail - 86,000 s.f.
- Estimated number of housing units - 120
- Estimated building height - 25 feet or 2 stories

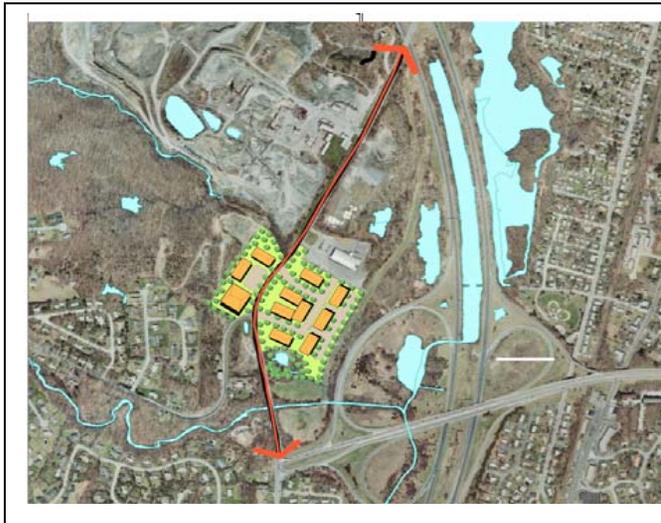


Figure 2-3. Phenix Avenue and Rte. 37 - Option 1

Phenix Avenue / Route 37 – Village Center Layout (Option 2)

The village center concept shown along Phenix Avenue consists of mixed-use building with retail on the ground floor with residences and offices above (see Figure 2-4). A cluster of single-family town homes is proposed to the rear of the site along with a building that would support some community facilities for the residents provided along Phenix Avenue. Parking for the retail users is in two lots on either side of Phenix Avenue, while parking is provided within the units for the residents and on street for visitors.

- Retail - 68,000 sf
- Community facility - 8,000 sf
- Estimated number of housing units - 60+50 (townhouses)= 110
- Estimated building height - 25 feet or 2 stories



Figure 2-4. Phenix Avenue and Rte. 37 - Option 2

Design and Streetscape Standards

Require design and signage guidelines in commercial corridors and streetscape improvements in the village centers to support development and improve the overall image of the areas.

In order to preserve and enhance the design quality of streets and buildings in different parts of Cranston, the City needs to implement regulatory mechanisms that are complementary to the design review process. Design and signage guidelines are principles established and approved by the City to guide new construction and the renovation of existing buildings. These would set the basis for the design review process. Streetscape guidelines would create a safe, comfortable, and attractive pedestrian environment through improvements in sidewalks, crosswalks, lighting, signage, and similar pedestrian level amenities.

Although some neighborhoods in Cranston have been improved such as Rolfe Square and parts of Pontiac Avenue, other areas could be supported with design and streetscape guidelines. For example, Knightsville has a series of connected buildings and

several amenities such as the Itri Memorial and a small park that provide a base for improvement. The areas along Reservoir Avenue and Park Avenue are business districts that could be supported by guidelines that specifically addressed the congestion, signage, and appearance issues. In addition, Pawtuxet Village lies within a corridor that could greatly benefit from the application of design guidelines for long-term improvement.

Regulatory mechanisms already exist in the form of local and national historic districts affecting certain areas of the City. Additional design and streetscape guidelines need to be aimed at complementing zoning and other existing regulations according to the specific character of each area. Criteria to be addressed by these new guidelines could include:

Design Guideline Criteria

- Preservation of existing buildings
- Styles for new construction
- Building massing and relationship to the street
- Pedestrian uses and open space
- Materials and colors
- Design and location of parking areas
- Signage
- Regulatory process requirements

Streetscape Guideline Criteria

- Pedestrian access
- Support infrastructure such as benches and trash receptacles
- Landscaping
- Informational and directive signs
- Public art
- Recognition and promotion of gateways
- Regulatory requirements

The standards should be considered as general guidelines, until made specific to a particular location or project type. However there

are a few issues that should be taken into consideration as the guidelines are defined and applied.

The design of sidewalks and crosswalks plays an important role in facilitating and encouraging pedestrian travel, and the proposed streetscape improvements place a strong emphasis on the quality of sidewalks and lighting. Streetscape improvements must meet appropriate design and construction standards, in order to ensure safe, complete and cost-effective construction. Design standards include numerous code requirements found in the Rhode Island Building Code, City and State level engineering standards, Rhode Island handicapped accessibility codes and the Federal American with Disabilities Act (ADA). Failure to meet these standards can lead to project denials, reconstruction, or legal action. Any proposed improvements must comply with all current requirements to the greatest extent possible.

Another consideration is that the design guidelines should be developed for the less urban areas of the City, and could be applied to the design of roads, accessibility, and projects along the Historic Farm Loop. This would allow the City to manage the visual and scenic qualities of the Historic Farm Loop, preserve the features that make the Loop attractive, and improve business for the farms.

Scenic Roads

Designating certain roadways as scenic, provides multiple benefits that accrue to the City and adjacent landowners. Local ordinances can designate scenic roads as a component of the state system of scenic highways pursuant to Title 24 Chapter 15 of the General Laws. Scenic roadway designations:

- Acknowledge local history and historical significance of a corridor;
- Establish a special travel link between areas;
- Ensure public notification of the visual qualities of an area as viewed from the road;
- Support economic development initiatives that take advantage of the public designation of views and vistas; and,

- Provide an alternative to suburban development landforms by ensuring adjacent development conforms to the scenic qualities.

The Historic Farm Loop roadways are considered appropriate for this designation.

Improve Neighborhood Stability

Protect and stabilize existing residential neighborhoods by increasing open space, improving roadway conditions, and making the zoning conform to existing uses.

Residential neighborhoods are the backbone of Cranston. The character of the buildings, the open space amenities, the type of pedestrian and vehicular access, and other factors determine the quality of life for its residents. All these factors contribute to the stabilization and attractiveness as well as the pride and sense of ownership that residents have. When these conditions compliment each other neighborhoods become a place where people want to live.

The City can protect and enhance its neighborhoods by improving these features:

- Increase open space in high-density residential areas with pocket parks that reflect the character of a neighborhood and allow residents and visitors to enjoy a break from active sidewalks and streets.
- Improve sidewalks and roadway conditions to allow a better flow of pedestrian and vehicular traffic to the homes and businesses.
- Change zoning to meet current land uses as an incentive to improve buildings without having to get variances for changes.

Enhance neighborhood identity through development and improvement of unique public features.

Public facilities in neighborhoods serve many functions and benefits such as recreation, open space, community gardens, education, natural and cultural resources, and transportation. The quality of these public features and assets is directly related to the identity and

image of the neighborhood. The City should ensure that these assets are protected, maintained, and enhanced so that residents, visitors, and users can enjoy them. Conserve Resources in New Subdivisions

Ensure new residential development in Western Cranston conforms to conservation subdivision standards.

The use of conservation subdivision design (CSD) development and standards directs development to:

- Increase open space and reduces the need to acquire new public park land,
- Reduce the isolation of neighbors,
- Decrease municipal costs,
- Reduce the loss of habitat,
- Reduce pollution and contaminant runoff, and
- In a special case, protect agricultural land and its scenic qualities.

Where conventional subdivision design consumes large tracts of land by situating each house on a parcel conforming with zoning, CSD would maximize the amount of preserved open space in a subdivision. CSD would concentrate the homes into those areas of a subdivision that are suitable for development which protects land and water resources, provides common spaces, and creates a strong sense of neighborhood. Although the City already has zoning for Residential Planned Districts or cluster developments that could be used for compact developments, this new CSD should be focused on specific areas in Cranston. Figure 2-5 provides an example of a conventional subdivision design that develops most of the land with houses. Figure 2-6 shows how CSD keeps the same number of house lots but with a significant decrease in the size of developed land.

Establish a heritage preservation program to preserve scenic landscapes.

Western Cranston has substantial scenic assets that could be lost due to the lack of protection under current regulations that do not specifically protect the views and street edges. Many of these views and heritage resources are along and include the road edges, which

may not be protected since they are on private land. In addition, there are no regulations to minimize loss of vegetation, protect landscape features and view sheds, require appropriate road designs, or preserve scenic viewing areas.



Figure 2-6. Conventional layout

Maximizes utilization of the land for development

Source: Randall G. Arendent, Conservation Design for Subdivisions

The City of Cranston has the opportunity to join nationwide efforts to preserve and protect irreplaceable historic resources by enacting the Heritage Preservation Site Program and establishing the Heritage Preservation Commission. This program is similar to the Historic District Commission, but would focus on scenic areas instead of relying on the age and character of buildings to establish a district. A local committee would advise the City Council and provide a forum for increasing public awareness of significant elements of the City's cultural, social, economic, political, visual, or architectural history.

Areas that are determined to be significant may be designated as a Heritage Preservation Site. Said designation would require City review on any proposed work with the issuance of a site alteration permit.

Preserve the agricultural lands along the Historic Farm Loop.

The City should continue its efforts to preserve and protect its remaining agricultural lands. The following strategies can be utilized in the furtherance of this goal:



Figure 2-7. CSD layout

Maximizes preservation of valuable resources

Source: Randall G. Arendent, Conservation Design for Subdivisions

- Conserve the basic resource - The preservation of productive agricultural land can be accommodated through conservation of prime agricultural soils, which protects the land best suited for farming.
- Concentrate development - Concentrating development in higher densities on smaller footprints promotes development that provides the same square footage or number of units, without displacing areas that could be preserved for open space and agricultural uses. This would include the use of the CSD technique to preserve the farms but allow adjacent development. An incentive to use this technique could be to allow a greater density of development with increasing percentages of area dedicated as open land.

- Transfer of development rights – A transfer of development rights (TDR) ordinance removes development potential from farmlands and concentrates that development in another location.
- Purchase of development rights - Another approach to limit further development is the purchase of development rights, which can be used as a bonus for other development sites without the direct transfer of development potential by zoning.
- Establish a “farm-based retail” overlay district based on the model proposed in South County whereby farm goods and related activities are allowed by right to permit farms to supplement income.
- Purchase the properties in fee simple, or purchase development rights to continue the properties as agricultural operations.

Pastore Center

Make the State properties at the Pastore Center more productive and supportive to public goals for the State and the City.

The Pastore Center presents a special opportunity to improve the City. It has excellent transportation access due to its central location in Cranston and close proximity to major roadways including Routes 2, 5, and 37 and Interstates 95 and 295. In the event that the State considers part of the property as surplus, the City should capitalize on these parcels to locate private development on the edges of the Pastore Center. This would be similar to the process that allowed the Chapel View project. This strategy would:

- Centralize new development in existing developed areas,
- Increase tax benefits to the City, and
- Use previously developed land, and
- Provide additional services to support the recent developments at the Center and surrounding areas.

The Pastore Center can remain an important State resource, but by its size and location, this land has the potential to be much more productive in terms of City and regional land use goals.

Future Land Use Map

The Future Land Use Map shows the proposed future land use citywide. There are several new plan components depicted on this map that were not shown on the 1992 Future Land Use Plan. These changes include:

Special Redevelopment Areas:

Special Redevelopment Areas are of three types.

- Areas in which the City anticipates undertaking redevelopment through mixed-planned development ordinances such as the Elmwood/Wellington industrial corridor, the Cranston Printworks, and the site of the former Trolley Barn;
- Areas in which the City believes that the current land use is appropriate but the existing zoning is not appropriate such as the Alpine Country Club, the Cranston Country Club; and
- Areas in which the City has identified specific sites where the existing zoning is not appropriate and requires further study prior to an appropriate land use designation is determined. For example, one such property is the residentially zoned property directly south of the Cranston Ice Rink.

For Special Redevelopment Areas, the existing underlying zoning shall continue to control until such time as a new zoning ordinance for the subject parcels is enacted.

Government / Institutional:

This designation has been placed on those properties within the City as having active federal/state/local functions or those properties that have significant historic value. This plan recommends the creation of a government/institutional [GI] zoning classification and further recommends those sites identified as government/institutional in the Future Land Use Plan be rezoned accordingly.

Neighborhood Commercial/Services and Highway Commercial/Services:

The Future Land Use Plan divides the previous 1992 designation of Commercial and Services into two new categories: Neighborhood Commercial/Services [NCS] and Highway Commercial/Services [HCS] in recognition that commercial land has a hierarchy of intensity of uses and service different market areas. NCS is oriented towards providing services to local neighborhoods while HCS is oriented towards providing services to citywide and regional markets. This plan recommends that the appropriate zoning for NCS is C-1, C-2 and C-3, and the appropriate zoning designation for HCS is C-3, C-4, C-5.

Open Space

The Future Land Use Plan designates the following areas as Open Space:

- State and local recreation areas;
- State and local vacant land;
- Floodplain areas;
- Bike paths;
- Large cemeteries;
- Land that had been designated as Open Space in the 1992 Comprehensive Plan;
- Private or institutional lands that serve an open space function such as the Champlain Reservation, the Audubon land in western Cranston and the Pawtuxet River Authority land in eastern Cranston.

The Plan recommends that for land that is not owned by the City, and that is not already zoned open space, this land should only be zoned Open Space with the permission of the land owner.

Right of Way:

City and State streets, the interstate highway system and railroad rights of way. The Plan recommends that ROW's not be given a zoning designation.

Industrial:

The Plan does not call for any change to the Industrial land use designation. Appropriate zoning for Industrial land remains M-1 and M-2.

Multi-Family:

The Plan identifies the larger existing complexes of rental or condominium developments as Multi-family. The appropriate zoning designation for Multi-family is B-2, C-1 and C-2.

Mixed-Use Planned Development:

The parcels identified as MPD are those areas that have been or are currently being developed through the MPD zoning ordinance. These sites include Chapel View, Johnson & Wales, and Mulligan's Island golf center.

Residential Land Use Designations:

The Future Land Use Plan creates residential land use categories based on intensity and use so that the residential land uses can be linked to specific zoning classifications. The following list presents the residential land use classifications with their appropriate zoning classifications:

LAND USE CLASSIFICATIONS	ZONING
Single Family Residential - Less Than 1 Unit Per Acre	A-80
Single Family Residential – 3.63 to 1 Unit Per Acre	A-12, A-20
Single Family Residential – 7.26 to 3.64 Units Per Acre	A-6, A-8
Single/Two Family Residential – Less than 10.89 Units Per Acre	B-1
Residential Less Than 10.39 Units Per Acre	B-2

Consistency of Zoning with the Future Land Use Map

This plan recommends that the City undertake the following zoning changes to achieve consistency between the City's Zoning Map and the Future Land Use Map.

Open Space:

Any land that has been designated on the Future Land Use Map as Open Space that is not currently zoned Open Space, should be zoned S-1 [lots that are over 80,000 square feet], or S-2 [new zoning district for open space lots less than 80,000 square feet]. For land that is not owned or controlled by the City, and that is not already zoned S-1 or S-2, this land should only be zoned Open Space with the permission of the land owner.

Governmental / Institutional:

Rezone all land designated on the Future Land Use Map as Governmental / Institutional to *Governmental Institutional [GI]*.

Residential Land:

Rezone the residential land on Norwood Avenue between Broad Street and the City of Providence municipal boundary from B-1 to A-8 [See attached map].

Several property owners have requested changes to their land use classification and zoning. Said requests are as follows:

- AP 36, Lot 26 – Change the land use classification from open space and residential to open space and industrial. Change the zoning from A-20 to M-2 (should zoning be changed to M-2, said zoning should be restricted to low impact uses to protect the abutting residential neighborhood).
- AP 36, Lot 1 - Change the land use classification from open space and residential to open space and industrial. Change the zoning from A-20 to M-2 (should zoning be changed to M-2, said zoning should be restricted to low impact uses to protect the abutting residential neighborhood).
- AP 8, Lots 308, 309, 310, 311, 312 & 277 – Change the land use classification from residential to neighborhood commercial services. Change the zoning from B-1 to C-2.
- AP 4, Lot 2661 – Change the land use classification on a portion of the lot (15,489 sq.ft +/-) from commercial and services to single family residential 3.64 – 7.26 units per acre. Change the zoning from C-5 to A-6.

- AP 18, Lots 1346, 1345 – Change the land use classification from residential to highway commercial and services. Change the zoning from A-8 to C-2.
- AP 15, Lots 372, 374 – Change the land use classification from residential to highway commercial and services.
- AP 19, Lots 114 – Change the land use classification from residential to Special Redevelopment Area and by extending the Future Village District.
- AP 35, Lots 3, 2 – Change the land use classification from residential less than 1 unit per acre to residential 1 unit to 3.63 units per acre. Change the zoning from A-80 to A-20.
- AP 12, Lots 123, 125 – Change the land use classification from residential Single/Two Family Residential less than 10.89 units per acre. Change zoning from B-1 to C-2 (should zoning be changed to C-2, said zoning should be restricted to protect the historic façade of the Knightsville Meeting House located on AP 12 Lot 125).
- AP 18, Lots 1284, 551, 1229 & 1929 “Moreau Land” - Change the land use classification from residential less than 1 unit per acre to Special Redevelopment Area conditioned on said land being developed at an A-20 density and only as a conservation residential subdivision.

These requests have been incorporated into the Future Land Use Map.

- AP 28, Lots 81, 82, 39. Change the land use classification from residential less 1 unit per acre to residential 1 unit to 3.63 units per acre. Change the zoning from A-80 to A-20.

This request **has not been incorporated** into the Future Land Use Map.

For properties, other than the actions identified above, where the current zoning and Future Land Use Plan are inconsistent, a action. rezone to make the property consistent is contingent upon owner

Special Redevelopment Areas

Three new districts could accommodate smart growth development. They would include the new zoning for mixed use developments that was described earlier. These districts can be used to encourage density where public services are available, and to provide affordable housing.

Mixed-use Planned Development – Low Intensity (MPD-L)

This mixed-use zone would be suited for townhouses, with 1st floor retail (about 20%), and 35’-40’ building heights. Suitable for transition areas and improved when adjacent to public transportation.

Mixed-use Planned Development – Medium Intensity (MPD-M)

This mixed-use zone would be suited for a retail district with commercial and residential on upper floors, with a minimum of two stories. Suitable for revitalizing and expanding village centers, and improved when adjacent to public transportation.

Mixed-use Planned Development – High Intensity (MPD-H)

This mixed-use zone would be suited for predominantly mixed commercial development, with live/work space or artists’ lofts, and 45’-50’ building heights. Suitable for encouraging significant redevelopment, and improved when adjacent to public transportation.

Proposed Areas for Special Redevelopment Areas

Sites that could be appropriate as a Special Redevelopment Area (SRA) are identified below:

- Former Ciga-Geigy site
- Elmwood/ Wellington industrial corridor
- Trolley Barn industrial area
- Cranston Print Works
- Alpine Country Club
- Cranston – Johnston Regional School
- Cranston Country Club
- Phenix Terrace
- “Moreau Land”

Land Use and Zoning Consistency

The lot sizes of many parcels in the A-6, B-1 and B-2 zoning districts are, on average, under the minimum lot size of 6,000 square feet for single family and 7,500 square feet for two-family homes. To reduce the number of variances that are required to improve buildings and permit new development, the City should amend the zoning ordinance to allow expansions to preexisting nonconforming lots in an expedited manner.

Table 2-3. Sizes of Lots = or <5,000 Square Feet in A6 and B1 Zones

District	Total Parcels	Parcels <5,000 SF	% parcels < 5,000 SF
A6 Zone	10,539	5,083	48%
B1 Zone	7,083	3,879	55%

Link Land Uses

Create bicycle and pedestrian links that improve connections between the extensive supply of historic, open space, and natural resources.

Cranston’s increasing use and demand for its supply of open space, historic, and natural resources can be met if the City connects or links its resources through land acquisition, designated routes, or other program or policies. Many of the existing greenways, water ways, bicycle paths, and other recreational areas should be connected to increase options for their use as well as improve both passive and active recreational opportunities for the residents of Cranston.

Smart Growth – Green Development Action Items

Interwoven throughout the various Plan Elements of the Comprehensive Plan is a recognition that future development within the City needs to be sensitive to both the environment and to Cranston’s social/historical character [Smart Growth or Green Development]. Within the Comprehensive Plan there are a number recommended activities and actions designed to achieve this goal. Taken as a whole, these recommended actions with the accompanying supporting language set as a priority that future

development in Cranston has a minimal, if not positive, impact on the environment and the City. In order highlight, this commitment, below is a table in which the various “Green Development/Smart Growth” actions as they appear in each Plan Element.

Table 2-4 Smart Growth – Green Development Action Items

Land Use Action Program		
LU-1	<p>Improve cluster/conservation subdivisions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise existing cluster (Residential Planned District) regulations to require the use of this land development technique. • Mandate that new residential development in western Cranston conforms to conservation subdivision standards. • Use these regulatory approaches in concert with conservation easements and tax assessments tools to preserve valuable natural and historic resources. • Within the application of these standards, encourage landscape diversity that creates an identity and sense of place. <p>Related Actions: H-4, NR-9</p>	<p>City Council Planning Commission Planning Department Public Works Department</p>
LU-2	<p>Control subdivision impacts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to amend subdivision regulations to promote land development patterns that minimize site disturbance, minimize visual impacts, and retain rural features and community character. • Consider Low Impact Development standards to reduce the impacts of land development and stormwater runoff. <p>Related Action: NR 20</p>	<p>City Council Planning Commission Planning Department</p>
LU-3	<p>Maintain continuity of access:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to identify areas that have special natural resources for protection through conservation design subdivisions, in order to ensure the preservation of major contiguous parcels and corridors. <p>Secure authorization to allow public access on trails in private, dedicated open space.</p>	<p>City Council Planning Commission Planning Department</p>
LU-4	<p>Establish a compact Village Center:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designate an area for development of a compact village center to serve Western Cranston, and establish standards and criteria for development within this district. • Prepare criteria and standards for development within and outside the village center based on the Transfer of Development Rights. • Include in the criteria standards for locations, character of development, densities, implementation mechanisms, review and approval procedures, provisions for public civic and community facilities and uses, maximization of utility and public infrastructure, and standards for public ways, pedestrian access, bicycle access and the interconnection of ways. 	<p>City Council Planning Commission Planning Department</p>
LU-5	<p>Mandate cluster/conservation subdivisions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase minimum lot area outside the Village Center, unless developed as cluster/conservation subdivisions. 	<p>City Council Planning Commission Planning Department</p>

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LU-6	<p>Adopt Transfer of Development Rights (TDR):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider a TDR as an option to increase density in the village center while reducing density outside the village center. <p>Related Action: NR-5</p>	<p>City Council Planning Commission Planning Department</p>
LU-7	<p>Use conservation restrictions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider conservation restriction or less-than-fee acquisition programs to limit the ultimate development potential of valuable parcels, in return for reductions in tax liabilities. 	<p>City Council Planning Commission Planning Department</p>
LU-9	<p>Preserve local and regional heritage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a heritage preservation program to preserve scenic landscapes and view sheds. Make the Historic Farm Loop a special focus of the heritage program. Implement a Scenic Road Overlay Zone to protect scenic aspects of the Historic Farm Loop. <p>Related Action: HP-1</p>	<p>City Council Planning Commission Planning Department Conservation Commission</p>
LU-10	<p>Preserve agricultural lands:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement an Agricultural Preservation Program. Identify specific parcels for preservation and work with the land owners to explore purchase of fee simple or development rights, and state tax programs to accomplish the preservation. Support local farm products and alternative farm products to help ensure the continued viability of farming. <p>Related Action: NR-8</p>	<p>City Council Planning Commission Planning Department Conservation Commission West Bay Land Trust</p>
LU-11	<p>Site new public facilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Site a new public facilities and services center to support residents and businesses in the western portion of the City. <p>Related Action: SF-13</p>	<p>Planning Department DPW</p>
LU-12	<p>Establish design standards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to improve site design standards to increase the quality of new development and use new 'smart growth' zoning techniques to assist these approaches. Adopt architectural design standards to increase the aesthetic quality of new commercial development or redevelopment. <p>Related Action: ED-23, C-23</p>	<p>City Council Planning Commission Planning Department</p>
LU-13	<p>Establish streetscape design standards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance streetscape design guidelines to apply to public construction projects and private construction projects that include public rights of way improvements. <p>Related Action: ED-23, C-23</p>	<p>Planning Commission Planning Department</p>
LU-14	<p>Review development impacts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update development impact fees to ensure that new development contributes adequately and proportionately to the costs of improvements required by such development. 	<p>City Council Planning Commission Planning Department</p>

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LU-17	<p>Apply sustainability policies to new projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include sustainability in drafting new regulations and review of new development projects. • Adopt the Urban Services Boundary of the Statewide Land Use Plan 2025 as a guide to land use and development. <p>Related Action: ED-24</p>	<p>City Council Planning Commission Economic Development Dept. Planning Department</p>
LU-18	<p>Adopt Mixed Use/ TOD Plans:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore the feasibility of mixed-use development plans for a village center project on public and private land at Phenix Avenue and Route 37 as suggested by conceptual illustration. • Investigate the feasibility of a mixed-use development plan for TOD development on industrial land between Elmwood and Wellington Avenue as suggested by conceptual illustration. 	<p>City Council Planning Commission Economic Development Dept. Planning Department</p>
Housing Action Program		
HA-3	<p>Encourage housing that is mixed into commercial projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet the Smart Growth goals of this Comprehensive Plan and the State. 	<p>City Council Planning Commission Planning Department</p>
HA-4	<p>Require conservation design subdivisions as the standard mode of development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply to remaining undeveloped land to conserve natural resources, protect public resources, improve property values, and improve accessibility. <p>Related Action: LU-1</p>	<p>City Council Planning Commission Planning Department Conservation Commission</p>
HA-5	<p>Enable existing nonconforming two and three-family unit dwellings to be modified, maintained and improved within the existing neighborhoods: Reduce burden of zoning and building regulations.</p>	<p>City Council Planning Commission Planning Department Building and Zoning Dept.</p>
HA-6	<p>Review zoning in existing residential neighborhoods to ensure the zoning matches, as closely as possible, what has already been built:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise in terms of dimensions and unit types, unless site constraints or specific needs determine otherwise. <p>Related Action: LU-26</p>	<p>City Council Planning Commission Planning Department Housing Task Force</p>
Economic Development Action Program		
ED-14	<p>Target large-scale, smart growth redevelopment opportunities at strategic locations to accommodate mixed-use, transit-oriented development. Focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Properties along I-95 such as the Wellington/Elmwood industrial area • Properties at the I-295/Rt. 37 intersection. 	<p>Economic Development Dept. Planning Department</p>
ED-15	<p>Target medium-scale, smart growth redevelopment opportunities. Consider additional locations near:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Garden City Center • Rolfe Square • Knightsville • Along I-95 and I-295. 	<p>Economic Development Dept. Planning Department</p>

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ED-17	Target grocery-anchored, neighborhood or community shopping centers serving the growing markets in western Cranston and Scituate.	Economic Development Dept. Planning Department
ED-21	Review sewer line extension and roadway acceptance policies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the policies promote the type of development planned for western Cranston. 	City Council Planning Commission Planning Department
ED-22	Target improvement of neighborhood commercial centers to service their market area and to reduce congestion for cross-town traffic. New neighborhood village center developments should be focused at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scituate Avenue and Pippin Orchard Road • Phenix Avenue and Natick Avenue. • Redevelopment of neighborhood centers should continue to occur at Pawtuxet Village, Knightsville, and Rolfe Square. 	Planning Department
ED-24	Develop design guidelines for site development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address different conditions and smart growth goals • Distinguish between each type of commercial area; major commercial center, village center, highway or arterial commercial • Development adjacent to transit. 	Economic Development Dept. Planning Department
Natural Resources Action Program		
NR-1	Use local zoning and land use regulations to assess and mitigate development impacts on rare and endangered species: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and prioritize critical habitat areas in western Cranston • Locate habitats of rare and endangered species. 	City Council Conservation Commission Planning Commission Planning Department RIDEM
NR-2	Adopt watershed management plans: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare plans in accordance to RIDEM standards to address potential pollution in compliance with NPDES Phase II requirements • Seek non-point source pollution mitigation funds from the state to assist in preparation. <p><i>Related Action: SF-5</i></p>	City Council Public Works Department Planning Commission Planning Department
NR-3	Promote a 'green' building program for all new construction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider a LEED-type program to analyze energy efficiency and sustainability. <p><i>Related Action: SF-6</i></p>	City Council Building and Zoning Department Plan Commission Planning Department Public Works Department
NR-5	Adopt a Transfer of Development Rights ordinance: Use development regulations to better manage development throughout the City Related Action: LU-6	City Council Planning Commission Planning Department West Bay Land Trust
NR-6	Adopt a 'farm-based retail' district: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pattern regulation similar to the South County, Rhode Island proposal (Farm and Forestry Strategies Report). 	City Council Planning Commission Planning Department

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NR-8	<p>Continue to implement the open space preservation strategy for Western Cranston:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify high value agricultural sites and open space areas to be permanently preserved. Identify and implement strategies to protect the aforementioned property. Related Action: LU-10 	<p>City Council Planning Commission Planning Department Conservation Commission</p>
NR-9	<p>Amend the cluster development regulations to reflect conservation design standards (i.e. conservation subdivisions)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use program in order to facilitate the preservation of significant areas of open space and environmentally sensitive areas. Require Conservation Subdivisions as the preferred form of land development. <p>Related Action: LU-1</p>	<p>City Council Planning Commission Planning Department</p>
NR-11	<p>Adopt programs for improvement of the City's lakes and ponds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Base the programs on the water quality data collected since the last Comprehensive Plan. Continue to support, and where possible further develop, the volunteer pond watching program for sampling of water quality. 	<p>Public Works Department Conservation Commission RIDEM University of Rhode Island</p>
NR-12	<p>Develop management programs for specific water bodies in order to improve water quality and foster increased recreational use.</p> <p>Related Action: SF-5</p>	<p>City Council Planning Commission Planning Department Public Works Department Conservation Commission</p>
NR-14	<p>Implement Best Management Practices (BMP's) for pesticides and fertilizers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with local farms to implement the practices Work with local businesses to manage bulk storage and movement of the materials 	<p>University of Rhode Island Cooperative Extension Service Conservation Commission RIDEM</p>
NR-14	<p>Implement Best Management Practices (BMP's) for pesticides and fertilizers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with local farms to implement the practices Work with local businesses to manage bulk storage and movement of the materials 	<p>University of Rhode Island Cooperative Extension Service Conservation Commission RIDEM</p>
NR-15	<p>Implement Best Management Practices (BMP's) for stormwater and erosion controls:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include requirements for all new subdivision and development projects. Implement the recommendations of the Fuss& O'Neill stormwater management study. 	<p>University of Rhode Island Cooperative Extension Service Planning Commission Planning Department Conservation Commission RIDEM</p>
NR-18	<p>Establish Watershed Management Plans, where necessary in cooperation with adjacent communities.</p>	<p>City Council Plan Commission Planning Department Conservation Commission Pawtuxet River Authority RIDEM EPA</p>

2. LAND USE PLAN

NR-19	<p>Adopt standards, such as Low Impact Development techniques, to better manage stormwater from roadways in new construction.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce impervious surfaces in new developments such as with porous pavements and reduced travel lane widths to reduce runoff. <p>Related Action: LU-2</p>	<p>Planning Commission Planning Department Conservation Commission Department of Public Works RIDEM</p>
NR-20	<p>Create restoration plans for the banks of the Pocasset and Pawtuxet rivers where roadways and development have degraded the rivers</p>	<p>Pawtuxet River Authority Planning Commission Planning Department Conservation Commission Public Works Department</p>
Service and Facilities Action Program		
SF-6	<p>Adopt energy conservation standards for City facilities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a long-term program to reduce energy costs for the City. <p>Related Action: NR-3</p>	<p>DPW Building Maintenance</p>
SF-7	<p>Continue to evaluate the need for a new municipal fire station in the southwestern part of the City.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate in accordance with the growth of Western Cranston. 	<p>Planning Department Fire Department</p>
SF-8	<p>Promote the construction of library facilities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Western Cranston branch library 	<p>Planning Department Library Department</p>

Land Use Plan Action Program

Table 2-4. Summary of the Actions and Responsibilities for this Plan

	Action	Responsible Agent(s)
Growth Management in Western Cranston		
LU-1	<p>Improve cluster/conservation subdivisions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise existing cluster (Residential Planned District) regulations to require the use of this land development technique. • Mandate that new residential development in western Cranston conforms to conservation subdivision standards. • Use these regulatory approaches in concert with conservation easements and tax assessments tools to preserve valuable natural, and historic resources. • Within the application of these standards, encourage landscape diversity that creates an identity and sense of place. <p>Related Actions: H-4, NR-9</p>	<p>City Council Planning Commission Planning Department Public Works Department</p>
LU-2	<p>Control subdivision impacts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to amend subdivision regulations to promote land development patterns that minimize site disturbance, minimize visual impacts, and retain rural features and community character. • Consider Low Impact Development standards to reduce the impacts of land development and stormwater runoff. <p>Related Action: NR 20</p>	<p>City Council Planning Commission Planning Department</p>
LU-3	<p>Maintain continuity of access:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to identify areas that have special natural resources for protection through conservation design subdivisions , in order to ensure the preservation of major contiguous parcels and corridors. • Secure authorization to allow public access on trails in private, dedicated open space. 	<p>City Council Planning Commission Planning Department</p>
LU-4	<p>Establish a compact Village Center:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designate an area for development of a compact village center to serve Western Cranston, and establish standards and criteria for development within this district. • Prepare criteria and standards for development within and outside the village center based on the Transfer of Development Rights. • Include in the criteria standards for locations, character of development, densities, implementation mechanisms, review and approval procedures, provisions for public civic and community facilities and uses, maximization of utility and public infrastructure, and standards for public ways, pedestrian access, bicycle access and the interconnection of ways. 	<p>City Council Planning Commission Planning Department</p>
LU-5	<p>Mandate cluster/conservation subdivisions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase minimum lot area outside the Village Center, unless developed as cluster/conservation subdivisions. 	<p>City Council Planning Commission Planning Department</p>
LU-6	<p>Adopt Transfer of Development Rights (TDR):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider a TDR as an option to increase density in the village center while reducing density outside the village center. <p>Related Action: NR-5</p>	<p>City Council Planning Commission Planning Department</p>

2. LAND USE PLAN

LU-7	<p>Use conservation restrictions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider conservation restriction or less-than-fee acquisition programs to limit the ultimate development potential of valuable parcels, in return for reductions in tax liabilities. 	<p>City Council Planning Commission Planning Department</p>
LU-8	<p>Use utilities to support smart growth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adopt a utilities services program that supports the smart growth, conservation subdivision and neighborhood services plans. Manage utility expansion in accordance with the Statewide Planning, Land Use 2025, and the Urban Services Boundary represented therein. 	<p>City Council Planning Commission Planning Department DPW</p>
LU-9	<p>Preserve local and regional heritage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a heritage preservation program to preserve scenic landscapes and view sheds. Make the Historic Farm Loop a special focus of the heritage program. Implement a Scenic Road Overlay Zone to protect scenic aspects of the Historic Farm Loop. <p>Related Action: HP-1</p>	<p>City Council Planning Commission Planning Department Conservation Commission</p>
LU-10	<p>Preserve agricultural lands:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement an Agricultural Preservation Program. Identify specific parcels for preservation and work with the land owners to explore purchase of fee simple or development rights, and state tax programs to accomplish the preservation. Support local farm products and alternative farm products to help ensure the continued viability of farming. <p>Related Action: NR-8</p>	<p>City Council Planning Commission Planning Department Conservation Commission West Bay Land Trust</p>
LU-11	<p>Site new public facilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Site a new public facilities and services center to support residents and businesses in the western portion of the City. <p>Related Action: SF-13</p>	<p>Planning Department DPW</p>
Commercial Development		
LU-12	<p>Establish design standards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to improve site design standards to increase the quality of new development and use new 'smart growth' zoning techniques to assist these approaches. Adopt architectural design standards to increase the aesthetic quality of new commercial development or redevelopment. <p>Related Action: ED-23, C-23</p>	<p>City Council Planning Commission Planning Department</p>
LU-13	<p>Establish streetscape design standards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance streetscape design guidelines to apply to public construction projects and private construction projects that include public rights of way improvements. <p>Related Action: ED-23, C-23</p>	<p>Planning Commission Planning Department</p>

2. LAND USE PLAN

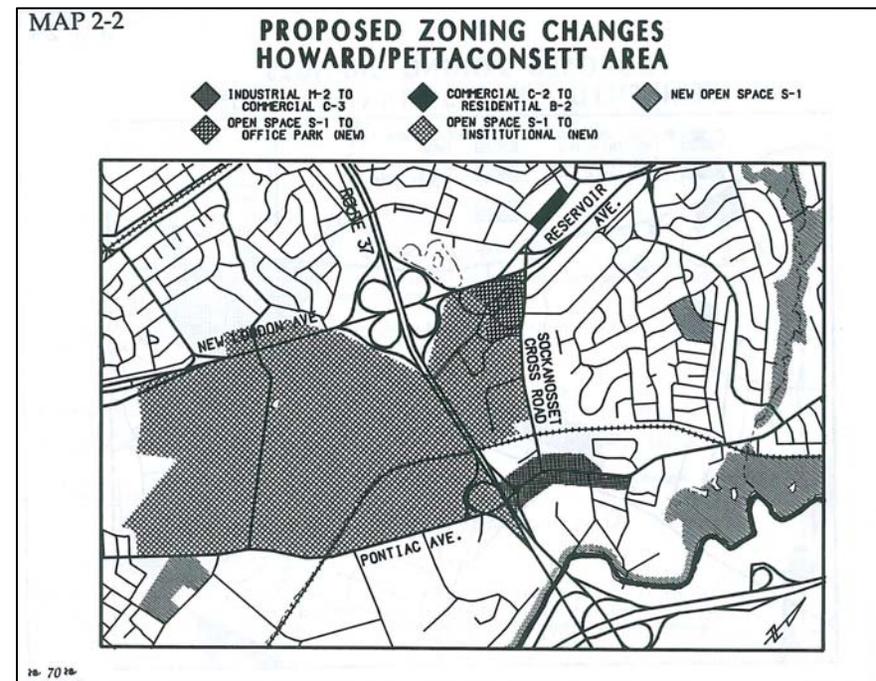
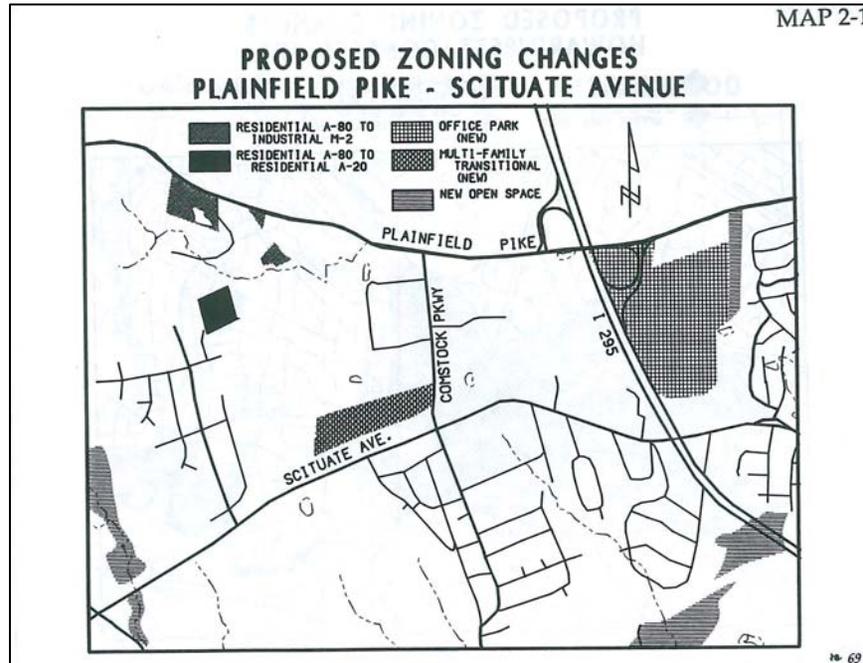
LU-14	<p>Review development impacts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update development impact fees to ensure that new development contributes adequately and proportionately to the costs of improvements required by such development. 	<p>City Council Planning Commission Planning Department</p>
LU-15	<p>Corridor studies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and prioritize commercial corridor segments for study, in order to provide guidance for appropriate regulatory changes and City economic development efforts such as marketing and financing programs. Identify specific development objectives, preferred commercial uses, circulation and safety improvements, and potential linkages among parcels. 	<p>Planning Commission Planning Department</p>
LU-16	<p>Revise Plainfield Pike zoning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revise zoning districts along Plainfield Pike to eliminate incompatible land uses and consolidate the industrial zoning of the area. 	<p>City Council Planning Commission Planning Department</p>
New Development and Redevelopment Projects		
LU-17	<p>Apply sustainability policies to new projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include sustainability in drafting new regulations and review of new development projects. <p>Adopt the Urban Services Boundary of the Statewide Land Use Plan 2025 as a guide to land use and development.</p> <p>Related Action: ED-24</p>	<p>City Council Planning Commission Economic Development Dept. Planning Department</p>
LU-18	<p>Adopt Mixed Use/ TOD Plans:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore the feasibility of mixed-use development plans for a village center project on public and private land at Phenix Avenue and Route 37 as suggested by conceptual illustration. Investigate the feasibility of a mixed-use development plan for TOD development on industrial land between Elmwood and Wellington Avenue as suggested by conceptual illustration. 	<p>City Council Planning Commission Economic Development Dept. Planning Department</p>
LU-19	<p>Establish a neighborhood village center in Western Cranston:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Propose a neighborhood village center development plan for a location at Pippin Orchard Road and Scituate Avenue or Phenix Terrace using smart growth principles. 	<p>City Council Planning Commission Economic Development Dept. Planning Department</p>
Fields Point Redevelopment		
LU-20	<p>Involve City in the (Base Relocation and Closure)BRAC process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage in the BRAC process to decide on the appropriate reuse of the Reserve Center at Fields point, which may be closed and available for economic development. Contact (Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation) RIEDC to initiate participation in the redevelopment decision-making process. 	<p>Mayor City Council Planning Commission Planning Department</p>

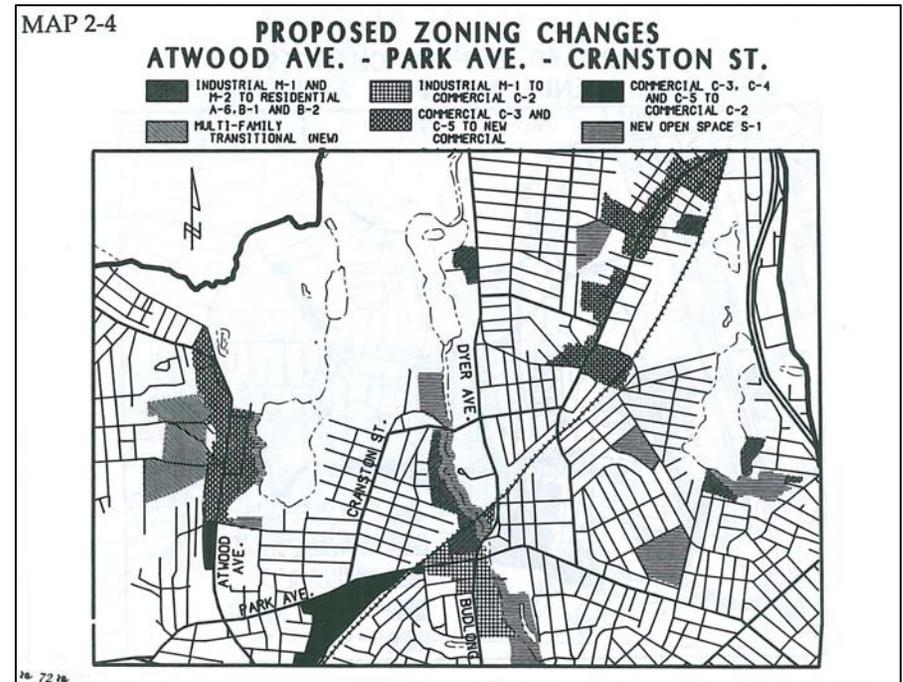
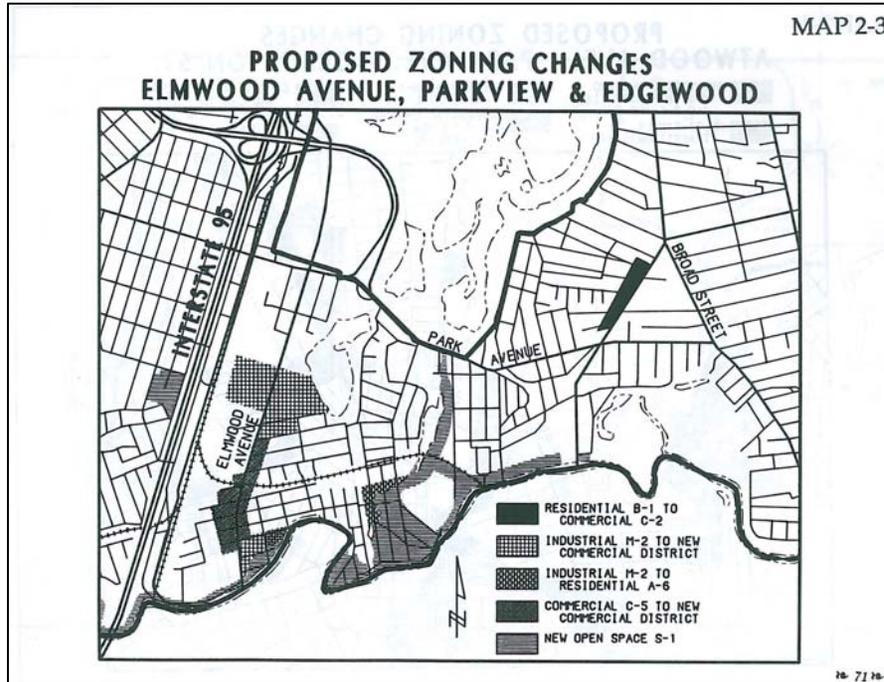
2. LAND USE PLAN

Former Trolley Barn Site Redevelopment		
LU-21	Continue efforts to implement a mixed-use development at the location of the former Trolley Barn site.	Mayor City Council Planning Commission Planning Department
Pastore Center		
LU-22	Negotiate with the State to allow private investment in the Pastore Center: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site this development on the edges to buffer the site and improve economic development opportunities in the City. Related Action: ED-20	Mayor Planning Department Economic Development Dept.
LU-23	Create a Government Institutional Zoning District: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply the district to the developed area of the Pastore complex, in place of the existing Open Space (S-1) district. 	City Council Planning Commission Planning Department
Land Use / Zoning Consistency		
LU-24	Amend Zoning Map and Zoning Ordinance to eliminate major inconsistencies between land use and zoning in the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warwick Avenue • Elmwood Avenue • Park Avenue • Cranston Street, • Additional sections of Atwood Avenue • Route 2 and Bald Hill Road • Norwood Avenue 	City Council Planning Commission Planning Department
LU-25	Adopt Smart Growth principles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt smart growth policies after a series of public meetings geared to determine the appropriate standards for the City. 	City Council Planning Commission Planning Department
LU-26	Protect and stabilize existing residential neighborhoods: Reduce minimum lot size required for open space zoning so that smaller parcels can be protected Improve roadway conditions Make the zoning conform to existing uses. <i>Related Action: H-6</i>	City Council Planning Commission Planning Department
LU-27	Create bicycle and pedestrian links: Improve connections between the extensive supply of historic, open space, and natural resources. Extend bicycle facilities to Western Cranston. Related Action: C-15	Planning Department City Council Planning Commission RIDOT

Proposed Zoning Changes:

The following zoning changes are advanced from the previous 1992 Comprehensive Plan and substantially incorporated into the Future Land Use Plan:







Introduction to the Housing Element

With the majority of land in Cranston zoned for residential uses, policies regarding housing are very important land use tools. Just as important is the fact that housing also defines Cranston through its residents and the way they live. People enjoy living in Cranston because of its quality of life. This Element proposes ways to maintain this high quality of life and how to improve upon it.

Key Challenges

While Cranston approaches build-out of residential development and while some neighborhoods are ‘aging’, this Element focuses on ways to improve existing neighborhoods and proposes more efficient ways of utilizing the remaining land.

- Existing residential neighborhoods, in both eastern and western Cranston, are stable and well maintained. Wholesale redevelopment of existing residential blocks would be disruptive and undesirable in most areas. Instead, the regulatory environment and city programs should support the existing neighborhoods in terms of maintaining their character.
- Overall growth is comparatively slow, except in western Cranston where undeveloped land is still available for new housing development. However, development of this land is constrained by environmental and other regulatory restrictions, and the public’s desire for open space preservation. This makes it even more crucial to plan how the remaining land in western Cranston is developed, preserved, or improved.
- The need for reasonably affordable and diverse housing has become more apparent in the region. Housing costs for homeowners and renters have risen dramatically over the past four to five years making rents and mortgages are unaffordable for a large percentage of the population. While

there is no State mandate to address this issue, affordable housing projects would assist Cranston in maintaining its demographic diversity.

Key Strategies

Reviving traditional development techniques and combining them with new environmental, transportation, economic development and housing concepts is the basis of *Smart Growth*. By adopting the principals of *Smart Growth*, housing, environmental protection, economic development, quality design, and transportation will be considered as integral components of future development project within the City. At the same time, preserving and supporting existing neighborhoods will improve livability and maintain community stability.

While all of the above issues, except *Smart Growth*, were identified in the 1992 Comprehensive Plan, they were not fully addressed in the intervening years. The challenge for Cranston is to develop policies and programs which provide diverse housing opportunities, require that new development preserves open space and protects the environment, while directing resources to maintain and improve existing neighborhoods.



Part I. Summary and Accomplishments of the 1992 Comprehensive Plan

Introduction

The Housing Element of the 1992 Comprehensive Plan focused on strategies for housing affordability, neighborhood stability, and preservation of the existing housing stock. This section summarizes the strategies and accomplishments of the 1992 Plan.

1992 Housing Conditions

The 1992 Plan identified two major sets of housing needs on the basis of geography, because the development patterns and existing housing conditions in western and eastern Cranston differ so greatly. In western Cranston, housing issues relate primarily to new residential development and its relationship to the overall framework of growth and environmental quality. In eastern Cranston, housing issues were related primarily to neighborhood conservation and preservation of the existing housing stock, especially the affordable housing stock. In addition, some housing issues were applicable on a citywide level, including housing affordability and provision of housing for populations with special needs. In western Cranston, housing issues related primarily to the loss of open space and the change in the area's "rural" character.

Managing Future Residential Development (western Cranston)

The 1992 Plan identified three major sets of issues relating to housing in the western half of the City. Strategies were then presented to address these specific issues.

Density and Infrastructure

The 1992 Plan stated that, in western Cranston, where municipal services were made available, density had increased and rural areas had been suburbanized. Where water and sewer were not available, the actual amount of residential development had been significantly

below the amount permitted by the regulations. Concerns over the ability of the area's soil to absorb and treat the wastewater effectively were mentioned as a cause for the extension of municipal sewers throughout the City. In addition, there was concern regarding the ability of existing roads and the ability to provide stormwater management to accommodate future growth. The 1992 Plan explained that if extensions were made to the existing infrastructure, it could "take the lid off" development in the area by removing the principal basis for large-lot zoning in western Cranston. The plan stated as an important policy that rural densities should be maintained in western Cranston, even if water and sewer services became available.

Residential Development Patterns

New residential development in western Cranston was characterized primarily by single-family subdivisions on relatively large individual lots.

Density and Diversity/Affordability

The relatively low-density development which had occurred in western Cranston had reportedly caused housing costs to rise more dramatically than in eastern Cranston.

Strategies for New Residential Development

Compact Development (western Cranston)

A portion of western Cranston's future residential growth was to be concentrated in one or more "village centers." These areas would be compact community centers containing a mix of residential, civic, and small commercial uses oriented toward providing services for the surrounding neighborhood.

Cluster Development (western Cranston)

“Residential Planned Districts” were to be given what was essentially a “density bonus” by increasing the required minimum lot area for conventional subdivisions while continuing to allow the existing densities for those projects that used the cluster optio

Cluster Development and Housing Affordability (western Cranston)

The City considered including provisions in its cluster development regulations that established a system of density increases in exchange for specific benefits to the residents of Cranston. For example, residential densities could be increased if a portion of the units in a development were offered at an affordable rate.

Conserving Existing Housing Resources (eastern Cranston)

For eastern Cranston, the principal housing issues identified in the Plan, had less to do with new residential development and more with the maintenance of the existing housing stock and preservation of housing resources for a wide range of incomes and housing needs.

Housing Rehabilitation

The 1992 Plan recommended increased communication between the Community Development Office and the housing code inspectors. The inspectors could inform potentially eligible families of the availability of housing improvement loans from the Community Development Office. The City was to pursue new initiatives specifically designed to expand the availability of housing for lower income families.

Preventing Displacement

It was suggested that the City discourage development proposals, which would result in dislocation of lower income families.

Preserving Existing Densities

The City was to identify areas of Cranston where development pressures were leading to the transformation of traditional neighborhoods through incremental increases in density. One approach to addressing this issue was to create neighborhood preservation overlay districts, that would be preceded by the preparation of neighborhood plans to define the character to be preserved and the public goals to be achieved.

Transitional Areas and Buffers

The City was to adopt design standards for transitional areas separating residential and commercial activities. These standards were to provide wide buffer areas along common property lines.

Housing Affordability

Affordable Housing – Opportunities and Constraints

Opportunities identified include an increase in the inventory of homes costing less than \$114,000, the slowing of condominium conversions, more reasonable land costs, the passing of the Zoning Enabling Act by the General Assembly, and the leadership role taken by the Cranston Community Action Program in developing rental housing alternatives.

Constraints identified included a very weak real estate market, which slowed the production of all housing including rental units and a lack of financial assistance from State and Federal sources for affordable housing development.

Neighborhood Improvement Programs

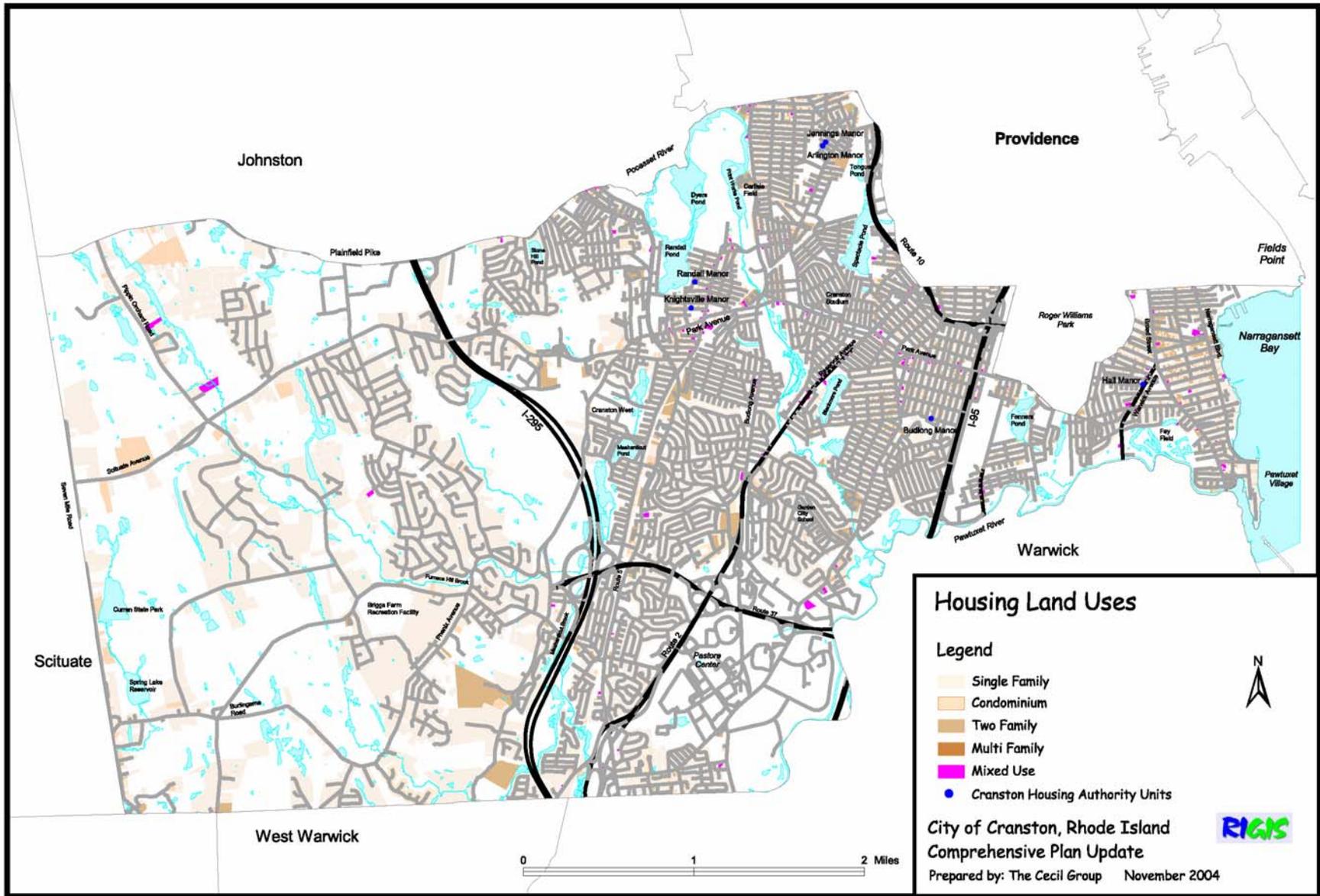
The City would a.)Continue to develop assistance programs providing residents with the financial means to maintain housing quality and b.)Concentrate physical improvements in neighborhoods with high proportions of lower income families.

Comprehensive City-wide Housing Strategy

The preparation of a Comprehensive Housing Assistance Strategy Plan, a prerequisite for receiving funds under many HUD programs, was identified as a priority for the City. This process would begin with the assemblage of an inventory of candidate properties, which would be appropriate for infill or adaptive reuse.

Regulatory Changes to enhance Housing Affordability

The City was to review its Zoning Ordinance to determine if existing regulations could be relaxed to reduce development costs and thereby encourage affordable housing.



Financing for Housing Development, Purchase and Rental

There was a need for new assistance programs specifically designed to expand housing opportunity for lower income households. Affordable housing was to be generated by a housing acquisition, rehabilitation, and resale program or a program offering density bonuses in exchange for units earmarked as affordable.

Housing Trust Fund

The City was to investigate a Housing Trust Fund to provide a pool of dedicated revenues to help low and moderate-income people secure affordable housing.

Rehabilitation Financing for Rental Housing

Cranston was to consider providing low cost rehabilitation loans to owners of rental housing to preserve affordable rental housing stock. This assistance was predicated on the condition that rents for such housing not exceed a set percentage of the median family income for the area, adjusted for unit size.

Financial Assistance to First-Time Homebuyers

The City was to develop programs to stimulate home ownership. These programs would include deed or mortgage restrictions to ensure long-term affordability.

Preservation of Subsidized Housing

The City was to retain the affordable units in their public housing projects and support legislation to retain these units as affordable and protect them from conversion to market-rate.

Condominium Conversion Controls

It was recommended that the City investigate its authority to enact controls that prohibit or limit the conversion of rental housing stock to market rate condominiums.

Housing Opportunities for Special Needs Populations

Housing alternatives, which were specifically intended to address the housing needs of Special Needs populations, existed in Cranston. It was specifically recommended that the City modify the Zoning Ordinance to conform to the Zoning Enabling Act, as well as remove

any obstacles to the creation of housing for elderly and handicapped people.

Public Education and Outreach

The Plan recommended public education to demonstrate how housing and community development programs could benefit Cranston.

Changes or Additions to the Plan since 1992

There were no amendments, approved by the City Council, to the Housing Element between 1992 and 2005. However, the changes to the goals for the former Boy's Training School included the addition of multi-family residential as an option for redevelopment.

1992 Plan Actions and Accomplishments

Table 3-1 summarizes the Housing Actions from the 1992 Comprehensive Plan and identifies which of these have been accomplished.

Table 3.1. Accomplishments of the 1992 Comprehensive Plan

Action	1992 Actions	Accomplishments and Changes
Managing Future Residential Development		
H-1	Provide density bonuses for cluster development that incorporates a specified proportion of affordable housing.	This action was not accomplished.
Conserving Existing Housing Resources		
H-2	Pool available resources to create new housing opportunities.	The Cranston Community Development Office implemented this action.
H-3	Create a CDBG grant program to provide funding for correction of serious code violations that present immediate health and safety concerns. In addition, provide rehabilitation loans for rental housing which is affordable to lower income families.	The Cranston Community Development Office implemented this action.
H-4	Create a housing acquisition, rehabilitation and resale program to purchase vacant and deteriorated structures, renovate them and offer them for resale to lower income families.	The Cranston Community Development Office implemented this action.
H-5	Enact regulations which require that all development proposals which envision relocation of lower income families provide housing allowances and relocation payments equal to or greater than the levels required by H.U.D.	This action was not accomplished.
H-6	Enact a neighborhood preservation overlay district ordinance to preserve the quality and character of the built environment in selected areas throughout Cranston.	This action was not accomplished.
H-7	Support or initiate legislative efforts to retain public housing units, subject to conversion, such as affordable housing.	Completed by others.
Housing Affordability		
H-8	Use the requirement of the preparation of the Comprehensive Housing Assistance Strategy as an opportunity to coordinate various City housing programs.	CHAS has been prepared and updated by the Cranston Community Development Office.
H-9	Create a Housing Trust Fund to generate revenue for local housing assistance program initiatives.	This action was not accomplished.

3. HOUSING

Housing Opportunities for Special Needs Populations		
H-10	Enact land use regulations which facilitate alternative group living arrangements that provide housing options for elderly and handicapped households – allowing assisted congregate housing for the elderly in certain zoning districts.	The zoning schedule of uses was revised in 1995 to expand congregate housing opportunities.
Public Education and Outreach		
H-11	Sponsor a City-wide public education program, which describes the accomplishments of Cranston's housing assistance programs and the needs that remain to be addressed.	The Cranston Community Development Office implemented this action.



Part II. Current Conditions and Issues

Introduction

This section provides information about Cranston's current housing market and identifies the current conditions and major issues facing the City of Cranston.

Regional Market Context

The regional housing market exhibits high occupancy rates, and steady rent and sales price appreciation. The region remains a favorable location for residential investors due to its location and economic strength.

Rhode Island

Prior to 2005, Rhode Island's housing prices grew faster than any other state. The state's residents are finding it increasingly difficult to purchase homes, as personal income growth has been outpaced by home price increases. Personal income has increased at an annual rate of 4.6 percent from 1998-2003. Over the same period, Rhode Island's median sales price for single-family homes increased at a 13.4 percent annual rate. This trend has accelerated steadily since 2000. Data from the RI Association of Realtors show an increase in housing prices at 10.68 percent for single family and 12.55 percent for multifamily in the second quarter of 2005, straining local housing markets. The median price of single-family homes rose to \$285,000 and multifamily rose to \$254,000. As a comparison, the national median sale price of single-family homes increased 5.6 percent annually over the previous time period, from \$128,400 to \$169,900.

The strong demand for housing in Rhode Island is reflected in the rental market as well. Due to the limited amount of rental units available and the challenge of purchasing homes at rapidly appreciating prices, the State has experienced lower rental vacancy rates than the nation since 1995. The State's 2005 4 percent rental vacancy rate fell well below the national vacancy rate of 8 percent.

Providence Metropolitan Area

Housing trends in the greater Providence Metropolitan Area (PMA) are consistent with those at the State level. Through 2005, existing home sale prices in the PMA have increased at a greater rate than the Boston Metropolitan Area and the United States.

However, the median sales price for a single-family home in the Providence market remains well below the cost for a similar home in the Boston market. People relocating from Massachusetts to Rhode Island have contributed significantly to the demand for housing, in the Providence Metropolitan area, and to a lesser degree in Cranston. According to census migration data, approximately 12,000 households moved into Rhode Island from Massachusetts from 1995 to 2000. In addition, the Rhode Island Public Expenditure Council reports that the average incomes of at least 60 percent of those moving to Providence County in 2005 were 12-15 percent higher than the incomes of existing residents in Providence County. This greater purchasing power has helped to increase housing prices and is posing a challenge for the existing residents in terms of affordability.

Demand for housing has fueled significant new construction in the PMA over the past years between 2001-2005. The majority (84 percent) of these new additions have been single-family homes, primarily located in communities surrounding Providence. Continued activity in residential development points to a strong demand for housing in the regional market.

Cranston Housing Conditions

The City features a diverse and aging housing stock, which has been supplemented by the construction of new residential units. Existing housing has shown appreciating property values and there is limited buildable land for new development.

The Cranston housing market is divided into three distinct sub-areas: eastern, central, and western Cranston. The sub-areas are divided by interstates I-95 and I-295, running North-South through the City. These sub-areas are characterized below:

Eastern Cranston

Eastern Cranston (including Edgewood, Pawtuxet, and Elmwood) is characterized by large historic houses in neighborhoods in close proximity to the waterfront and a steady increase in property values over the past three decades. Investment, particularly along the waterfront, has been fueled by the quality of amenities in this area. These amenities include the water views, the historic character, the neighborhood feel, and the access to Providence. Much of the area has undergone gentrification as young professionals invest in homes and historic neighborhoods. This sub-area is primarily built out and is the slowest growing of the three. It has averaged a net increase of only 5 units per year between 1996 to 2005. Future housing issues in eastern Cranston relate primarily to the continued preservation of existing housing stock and displacement of existing residents.

Central Cranston

While Cranston lacks one true city center, most population growth and development has occurred around a series of neighborhoods and corridors in central Cranston (Auburn, Garden City, Arlington, Knightsville, Eden Park, Friendly Community, Meshanticut, Glen Woods). Central Cranston features a diverse housing stock. Some neighborhoods in central Cranston have a mature housing stock and scattered deteriorating structures. Other neighborhoods are characterized by post WWII suburban development. Some of these areas now face issues relating to maintenance of the existing housing stock and the potential opportunities for infill and mixed-use redevelopment.

Western Cranston

Western Cranston has seen significant residential development activity on formerly agricultural land, resulting primarily in single-family homes on ½ to 2-acre parcels. The addition of new residential units in western Cranston reflects a 3 percent average annual increase in the number of households from 1996 to 2005, compared with 0.4 and 0.3 percent increases for central and eastern Cranston, respectively. Preservation of existing undeveloped land, historic and

cultural resources, infrastructure capacity, and traffic are western Cranston's largest concerns as a result of this high growth trend.

Existing Housing Stock

While 56% of all Cranston housing units were built before 1960, only 10% of Cranston's housing stock has been constructed since 1990. These primarily consist of single-family homes in western Cranston. Recent trends in single-family home construction in Cranston are consistent with those of neighboring communities.

While no one neighborhood has a substantial number of boarded up or abandoned units, a number of older properties, particularly in Central Cranston, are candidates for significant reinvestment. Many of these properties are nearly 100 years old and offer historic and architectural value.

Almost 38% of the total housing units in Cranston are in buildings with two or more units. These are predominantly located in central and eastern Cranston near the older commercial corridors. The majority (22 %) of the City's multi-family housing units are located in 2 and 3-unit buildings, reflecting the popular style in the early to mid 20th century.

Market Conditions

Median sale prices for both single-family and condominium units increased dramatically through 2005. Single-family home values in Cranston have appreciated at the same rate as the State. Local officials, community members, and real estate professionals report that it has become increasingly difficult to find a single-family home in reasonable living condition for under \$200,000, causing residents to spend a greater percentage of their income on housing.

Condominium sales have experienced similar appreciation through 2005. The sales that have occurred are a mix of new construction primarily in western in Cranston and the conversion of existing 2 and 3-unit homes in central and eastern Cranston.

Rental Market: Due in part to the rapid increases in housing prices, Cranston has a healthy rental market. Although approximately one-third of Cranston's existing housing stock is in rental units, no significant construction of market rate rental housing has occurred in the past 15 years, resulting in strong demand for the available units.

This demand will be met in part with the addition to the market of about 200 planned or recently completed units.(Atwood Village, JPI, Newbury Village, Springfield Apartments)

A survey of market-rate apartment complexes with at least 50 units totaling 1,130 units in Cranston shows signs of strong demand. Gross lease rates for 1-bedroom apartments range from \$690 to \$1,200 and average \$916 per month. Lease rates at these properties have increased throughout 2005, revealing an upswing in demand. The aggregate average occupancy for the properties is 97 percent, well above the 93 to 95 percent threshold generally accepted as indicators of market equilibrium.

Housing Affordability

Rapid increases in both single-family home and condominium housing prices through 2005, which have increased faster than incomes, have put greater burdens on residents of Cranston. Less than 5 % of Cranston's total housing stock is considered affordable for low and moderate-income families. This is below the State average of 7.9 percent.

The high costs of for-sale housing have made rental housing a relatively affordable option in Cranston. Almost 2,000 households in Cranston with incomes of \$50,000 or more pay less than 20 percent of their gross household incomes on rent and assorted expenses. Many of these householders would be willing and able to pay greater amounts; these figures signal potential demand for new high-end or luxury rental products.

The Cranston Housing Authority manages six elderly manors, which house a total of 587 senior and disabled residents, with first priority given to veterans and local residents. The agency manages 41 housing units (single and two-family homes) throughout Cranston. These are leased to income-qualified residents at an affordable rate. Three of these units have been sold to qualified buyers (end of 2005).

The Cranston Housing Authority reports that a lack of developable land has resulted in high land values and a tight housing market which makes it difficult to create new affordable housing. High land values in western Cranston pose a unique challenge to provide housing at an affordable level. While there is the potential to create

affordable housing in central and eastern Cranston, by targeting infill development and redevelopment of existing 2 and 3 family homes, a healthy rental market in this sub-area makes any significant investment in affordable housing a challenge.

The Consolidated Plan

A Consolidated Plan is an outline for spending HUD, Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Rhode Island Housing, and similar program funds within a community by setting goals for community development.

The City prepared a 2005-2010 Consolidated Plan that proposes new and renovated housing units for affordable rentals and homeownership. Important examples of the goals are the production of affordable rental units through new construction (100 units over five years), and by renovating the existing housing stock (50 housing units over 5 years) with assistance from RI Housing utilizing HOME funds.

The primary goals set in the 5-Year Consolidated Plan are to:

- Expand affordable housing and assist new homeownership;
- Create quality rental units;
- Provide housing for special needs and homeless;
- Improve public facilities and services to youths, elderly and families; and,
- Support projects and programs for job creation.

New Additions/Development Trends

Over 1,600 new units have been added to the Cranston housing stock over the past ten years. (1996-2005) Single-family units have accounted for the majority (98 percent) of those. The majority of this construction (71 percent) has occurred in western Cranston.

Under current zoning, areas in central and eastern Cranston allow for the densest development in the City. All multi-family structures with three or more units built in the past ten years have been located in central Cranston.

Favorable market conditions have produced several new multi-family residential proposals in response to the strong demand including: Crossroads Condominiums, Newbury Village, and Chapel View.

In addition to the above projects, local officials report continuing activity in the conversion of existing 2 and 3-family homes to condominiums. Several condominium units have been created by this method primarily in eastern Cranston, in the past five years.

Several hundred new apartment units are either recently completed or under construction. A major apartment complex, Jefferson Place, is currently under construction off Independence Way with 196 market-rate units. This is the largest apartment project since 1989. Other projects may be proposed as housing prices continue to appreciate (and interest rates rise) and residents are forced to consider rental-housing alternatives.

Single-family homes in western Cranston continue to be absorbed into the market at a healthy rate. In the remainder of the City, new duplex/townhouse structures will continue to be built as large tracts of developable land become increasingly scarce.

Conservation Subdivisions

When properly designed and regulated, the subdivision of land can meet both the goals for preservation of critical resources and high quality development. The 1992 Comprehensive Plan proposed actions to revise the cluster regulations and amend the Subdivision and Land Development Regulations to encourage better land use and to identify resource areas for protection. Since the adoption of the 1992 Comprehensive Plan, the concept of Conservation Subdivision Design (CSD) has evolved as a new method to improve the subdivision and land development process to meet these goals. Further discussion on CSD can be found in the Land Use section.

The CSD process could be utilized in western Cranston. Undeveloped land in western Cranston has very different characteristics from other areas of the city:

- It is primarily zoned for residential development;
- Water and sewer utilities do not completely service the area;
- This area contains some of the City's last remaining agricultural land;

- The area has unique topographic features;
- A small portion of it is located within the Scituate Reservoir watershed;
- The area contains the largest, preserved open space parcels in Cranston;
- The city's "farm loop" and bike path run through this area; and;
- Roads in western Cranston are not designed for large volume traffic flows.

These conditions call for an approach to development that recognizes the above inherent limitations and opportunities by establishing a different way of developing subdivisions as "Conservation Subdivisions." Conservation Subdivisions will:

- Allow greater flexibility and creativity in design of residential developments;
- Encourage permanent preservation of open space, agricultural land, forest, forestry land, wildlife habitat, and other natural resources such as aquifers, watershed, water bodies, wetlands, and historical and archeological resources in a manner consistent with the Comprehensive Plan;
- Encourage a more efficient form of development that is less sprawling, consumes less open land, and conforms to existing topography and natural features;
- Minimize the total amount of disturbance on a site which preserves the natural topography of a site;
- Provide additional amenities within the subdivisions such as pedestrian and bicycle paths which can be linked to other amenities;
- Allow for the construction and maintenance of roadways, utilities, and services in a more economical and efficient manner.

The success of the conservation subdivision process is determined by its approach: the subdivision design should be based on its resource quality and livability, and should also allow flexibility in the dimensional standards and building types. Even though variable building types are already permitted in different areas of western Cranston, the Planning Department should work with developers to create successful plans by using flexible standards.



Open land at Pippin Orchard and Scituate Avenue intersection is a possible site for a conservation subdivision and Smart Growth project.



Part III. Plan Strategies and Actions

Many of the Housing element actions proposed in the 1992 Comprehensive Plan were not fully implemented. Consequently, this Plan proposes a different process and focus to meet the housing goals of the City.

Market Potential

Cranston shows signs of pent up demand in both its rental and its for-sale housing markets. Given appropriate sites, the market would produce new high-quality housing in a variety of formats. Such housing could be situated in mixed-use settings, and/or on formerly underutilized properties.

Affordable Housing

A key item in this Plan is a proposal to adopt an affordable housing goal. The approach to achieving this goal is to set up a citizen-based effort that will refine the goal, raise funds outside the city budget, educate the public, and promote actions that would make the objectives a reality. At the same time, existing neighborhoods must be supported and new development on the remaining land should be developed to enhance the city's character and quality of life.

As an initial goal, this Plan proposes that the City take active steps to bring it into conformity with the State's mandate for affordable housing (10% affordable). The goal is to generate at least 30 affordable units per year. This number can then be used as a basis to consider the success of different approaches such as conversion and preservation of existing housing stock, and new construction. This approach supports the 2005-2010 Consolidated Plan's goals for housing.

Inclusionary Zoning for Affordable Housing

Inclusionary zoning is a very effective tool to increase the affordable housing supply. It requires that some affordable housing units be constructed as part of every new or rehabilitated residential

development. With financial and regulatory incentives, inclusionary zoning creates a market-based solution for generating affordable housing without requiring significant outlays by the City.

When drafting inclusionary zoning provisions, the City may consider:

- Income levels the affordable housing serves
- Mandatory and voluntary provisions
- Incentives for developers to mitigate costs
- Alternatives to on-site development of affordable housing
- A zoning approach to affordable housing is the most effective way to increase the number of affordable housing units in a community.

In practice, inclusionary zoning may apply to all qualifying new residential development or to specific types of development, such as assisted living units. Inclusionary zoning may contain a threshold number of units that, if permitted, trigger affordable housing development requirements. An ordinance should also identify income targets for the population to be served, and mechanisms to ensure permanent affordability.

Inclusionary zoning typically contains incentives for developers such as density bonuses, expedited permitting, reduced parking requirements, and tax breaks. Such incentives help developers offset the financial burden and economic risks associated with developing affordable housing and protect the City from potential legal challenges to the zoning provisions.

Inclusionary zoning bylaws can also include hardship provisions that allow developers to replace their obligations to build affordable housing on-site with a range of alternatives, including fee-in-lieu payments and off-site affordable housing construction.

Conservation Subdivisions

Upgrading the City's approach to land development with the Conservation Subdivision approach, together with finalizing policies for infrastructure improvements, will improve the quality of development, the protection of natural resources and the programming for extension of utilities and road improvements. This is particularly true within western Cranston. In implementing this approach, the intent is not to increase the density of allowed development, but to improve the design and impacts of residential growth.

Suburban homes in Cranston



Size in A-6, B-1 and B-2 Districts

Allowing 5,000 square foot lots within the A-6, B-1 and B-2 districts to become conforming would reduce a financial burden on the property owners when obtaining building permits in these districts. This could be an incentive to create more housing and improve existing housing. Although not required to be affordable, the new and improved units would help meet the current demand for housing.



Housing Action Program

Table 3.2 Summary of the Actions and Responsibilities for this Plan

	Housing Actions (HA)	Responsibility
Adopt Inclusionary and Smart Growth Standards		
HA-1	<p>Enact inclusionary zoning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase affordable housing in new subdivisions and development projects as appropriate through incentives and bonuses • Require a proportion of units as affordable housing (as defined by State regulations) in each new housing project over ten units in size. 	<p>City Council Housing Task Force Planning Commission Planning Department</p>
HA-2	<p>Set a short-term, yearly goal of 30 new affordable housing units per year with a target of 150 units at the end of five years.</p>	<p>City Council Planning Commission Housing Task Force Planning Department</p>
HA-3	<p>Encourage housing that is mixed into commercial projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet the Smart Growth goals of this Comprehensive Plan and the State. 	<p>City Council Planning Commission Planning Department</p>
Conserve Resources in Future Subdivisions		
HA-4	<p>Require conservation design subdivisions as the standard mode of development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply to remaining undeveloped land to conserve natural resources, protect public resources, improve property values, and improve accessibility. <p><i>Related Action: LU-1</i></p>	<p>City Council Planning Commission Planning Department Conservation Commission</p>
Conserve Existing Housing Resources		
HA-5	<p>Enable existing nonconforming two and three-family unit dwellings to be modified, maintained and improved within the existing neighborhoods:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce burden of zoning and building regulations. 	<p>City Council Planning Commission Planning Department Building and Zoning Dept.</p>
HA-6	<p>Review zoning in existing residential neighborhoods to ensure the zoning matches, as closely as possible, what has already been built:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise in terms of dimensions and unit types, unless site constraints or specific needs determine otherwise. <p><i>Related Action: LU-26</i></p>	<p>City Council Planning Commission Planning Department Housing Task Force</p>

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Establish an Affordable Housing Task Force		
HA-7	Create a Housing Task Force: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Request the Task Force research, advocate, and coordinate affordable housing programs. 	Mayor City Council Planning Commission Community Development Planning Department
HA-8	Create a Housing Trust Fund: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use fund to generate revenue for local housing assistance program initiatives. 	Mayor City Council Community Development Housing Task Force
Initiate Public Education and Outreach		
HA-9	Sponsor citywide public education programs on affordability	Mayor Housing Task Force Community Development
Provide Density Bonuses		
HA-10	Provide density bonuses for developments that incorporate a specified proportion of affordable housing. <i>Related Action:</i> HA-1, HA-2	City Council Planning Commission Planning Department
Conserving Existing Housing Resources		
HA-11	Expand the CDBG grant program which provides funding for correction of serious code violations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Address immediate health and safety concerns. Provide rehabilitation loans for rental housing which is affordable to lower income families. 	Community Development Housing Inspections Housing Task Force
HA-12	Expand the housing acquisition, rehabilitation and resale program: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Purchase vacant and deteriorated structures, renovate them and offer them for resale to lower income families. 	Community Development Housing Inspections Housing Task Force
HA-13	Require all development proposals, which may displace lower income families, provide housing allowances and relocation payments equal to or greater than the levels required by the U.S. Housing and Urban Development agency.	City Council Community Development Planning Commission Planning Department
HA-14	Enact a neighborhood preservation overlay district ordinance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preserve the quality and character of the built environment in selected areas throughout Cranston. 	City Council Planning Commission Planning Department
HA-15	Adopt an adaptive re-use ordinance to facilitate the creation of affordable housing.	City Council Community Development Housing Task Force Planning Commission Planning Department

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HA-16	Develop an inventory of vacant city owned, tax-title lots which would be suitable for development	City Council Community Development Housing Task Force Planning Commission Planning Department
HA-17	Partner with non-profit affordable housing organizations to create affordable housing	City Council Community Development Housing Task Force Planning Commission Planning Department
Coordinate Programs		
HA-18	Use the Comprehensive Housing Assistance Strategy as an opportunity to coordinate various City housing programs by recognizing the CHAS in the Comprehensive Plan.	Housing Task Force Housing Authority Planning Department
Housing Opportunities for Special Needs Populations		
HA-19	Enact land use regulations, which encourage alternative group living arrangements, especially for elderly and handicapped.	City Council Community Development Housing Task Force Planning Commission Planning Department

Additional Related Actions:

Smart Growth Principles: LU-2

New Development Projects: LU-5, LU-6, LU-7

Western Cranston: LU-10

Targets for Smart Growth Projects: ED-5, ED-6, ED-8



Introduction to the Economic Development Element

Historically, Cranston was a suburban ring community of Providence until it developed its own city municipal designation. In the context of modern, 21st century cities, Cranston is not a city but more a series of distinct places that haven't been formed and built through city logic. Cranston does not have a traditional downtown and at the moment, does not have the economic capacity or have the need to create one. If it did, it would immediately compete with the likes of Providence, and need to consider a high level of focus and investment to make it work. Cranston is actually a loose network of places (urban, suburban, rural neighborhoods, and village centers). There are neighborhoods that have the potential to strengthen their identity which will help define the overall character of the City. Given Cranston's rich diversity of places, it can provide a broad array of built form and public domain options for innovators and economic development.

As Cranston moves forward, it still needs to address the traditional economic development goals:

- Increase the tax base with new private investment in commercial and industrial properties;
- Promote emerging industries to maintain local shares of jobs and businesses;
- Export new goods and services to regional populations and attract outside money in support of economic development; and,
- Create new and better jobs with consummate wage increases for all levels of employment.

Key Challenges

- The issues this element has attempted to answer are: Cranston must reinvent and connect itself within a broad and distributed network of business activity at both the regional

and global level. Cranston needs to be proactive in connecting and distributing its home-grown capability to other places to foster economic development. [Place-Centered Economic Development]. Cranston does not view itself as a significant node within the broader network of innovation capability within the State and the region.

- Great opportunity exists to develop a well-organized economic development entity to lead the charge.
- A lack of a compelling vision and coherent strategy creates a 'take what comes' attitude to economic development.
- Local innovation and entrepreneurship is not understood and leveraged to the community's fullest capacity.
- More can be done to utilize Information Technology (I.T.) to improve services and City operations, directly affecting the attractiveness (Image and "Place") of the community. This is especially true in the area of web-based technology.
- Cranston's mainstream education system is the best of a traditional and limiting model for 21st century teaching and learning.
- In addressing the issues identified above, Cranston will be able to best further address the traditional issues denoted below:
 - Where to focus efforts for creating new jobs that Cranston residents need and how to train residents needed for new jobs and skills.
 - Ways to generate successful new projects that meet the locational, design, environmental, transportation, and tax goals of the city.
 - Where and how to focus efforts on revitalization of existing commercial areas.

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- Offset employment losses from the manufacturing sector with new opportunities in other sectors.

Key Strategies

The City of Cranston can address all of these issues through four different levels of actions from broad-scale marketing down to person-to-person approaches:

- High-end business growth – Target markets that could improve both tax and job bases such as office and medical businesses.
- Redevelopment projects – Improve infrastructure and rezone to allow major redevelopment in specified areas.
- Neighborhood commercial centers – Support neighborhood business centers to stabilize and strengthen surrounding neighborhoods.
- Small-business friendly environment – Assist small businesses start-up and expansion.



Part 1. Summary and Accomplishments of the 1992 Plan

Introduction

The Economic Development element of 1992 Comprehensive Plan presented a series of strategies and related actions for maintaining and expanding the City's economic and employment base. These strategies involved land use policies and regulations, municipal programs and policies for taxation, marketing, data management, and financial assistance for new and growing businesses.

The strategies targeted sectors with growth potential and long-term value, and promoted protection and enhancement of existing commercial and industrial areas.

Preserve and Increase Employment Opportunities

The 1992 Plan presented several strategies to assist existing businesses and industries through training, financing, and technical assistance programs.

Maintaining the City's Industrial Base

Manufacturing provided a high share of employment in Cranston and while it had historically concentrated on jewelry and related industries, it has since become more diversified. The Plan promoted a revolving loan fund, training, and technical assistance programs to maintain and expand this sector.

Retraining for the 1990's

The Plan proposed monitoring the results of the State's "Workforce 2000" study and adapting their programs to meet the emerging skill needs of the State's employers. The Plan also recommended supporting 'English as a Second Language' programs to accommodate new workforce entrants from non-English speaking countries.

Municipal Tax Policies

The goal of preserving and expanding Cranston's tax base was tempered with particular consideration to avoiding tax policies that might be identified as discouraging specific types of industry, which the City wanted to attract.

Support for Startup and Early-Stage Businesses

The Plan considered a partnership arrangement with a developer and with providers of technical assistance, such as local colleges and URI, to create an incubator in which startup businesses would have access to inexpensive space and support services in their vulnerable early stages.

Support for Socially and Environmentally Responsible Enterprises

The Plan asked the City to "pick winners" by targeting the resources of its Revolving Loan Fund, joint training programs with the Providence-Cranston Service Delivery Area (a job training partner with the City) and staff time to companies that meet defined responsibility standards.

Support for Job-Creating Enterprises

The City should direct assistance that encourages new businesses and business expansion in the form of the revolving loan fund, various workforce-training funds, and an increased economic development staff.

Import Capital and Expand Cranston's Economic Base

The 1992 Plan presented strategies for targeting growth-oriented industries and export businesses.

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Support for Export Businesses

The City should help its companies assess their ability to compete in international markets and help them find resources to open such markets. In addition, the City should give priority for revolving loan funds and other assistance to companies that target worldwide markets.

Support for Small, Growth-Oriented, Value-Adding Businesses

Cranston has a healthy, diverse portfolio of businesses in a variety of industries and sectors. It is recommended that the City continue its policy of encouraging growth and expansion of small- and medium-sized companies rather than putting valuable resources into attempts to bring in the larger companies.

Expand the Industrial and Commercial Tax Base

The 1992 Plan presented policies aimed at creating new commercial centers, and protecting the integrity and quality of existing and growing industrial areas.

Strengthening and Preserving Existing Industrial Districts

The Plan considered strengthening industrial zoning standards to prevent low-value-added development from limiting opportunities for future industrial expansion. A recommended approach was to revise industrial zone designations to make office buildings a prohibited use in industrial zones and to permit warehousing and distribution in these zones by special permit.

Preventing Commercial Sprawl Along Plainfield Pike

Cranston took steps through its planning and zoning standards to prevent unsightly, uncoordinated, commercial development from occurring on its side of the municipal boundary that it shares with Johnston along Plainfield Pike. The Plan proposed a joint set of development standards.

Industrial and Commercial Revitalization

The 1992 Plan outlined strategies for promoting the redevelopment and reuse of major industrial and institutional sites.

Redevelopment of Major Industrial and Institutional Sites for Economic Development

The Plan proposed continued involvement in the redevelopment of properties such as the Boys' Training School, the Narragansett Brewery, and the Fields Point shoreline.

Inter-municipal Cooperation for Economic Development

Although the cities of Cranston and Providence may have different priorities for redevelopment at the Fields Point site and the Narragansett Brewery neighborhood, neither will achieve its goals without the active cooperation of the other. The Plan proposed creation of a Providence/Cranston Redevelopment Agency responsible for comprehensive redevelopment of Fields Point and development of a neighborhood revitalization program.



Garden City Mall

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Changes or Additions to the Plan since 1992

The Cranston City Council approved the following changes to the Economic Development Element of the 1992 Comprehensive Plan.

- Amended the Plan goals and uses for the Boys Training School from a low-traffic volume, corporate headquarters, R&D campus or office development to a mixed office, retail and multifamily development.

- Amended the Plan to identify the Narragansett Brewery as a Special Redevelopment Area to allow the commercial center project that is almost completed.
- Amended the Plan to promote redevelopment of the Field's Point area as an educational institutional zone after the property was acquired by Johnson & Wales University.

Plan Accomplishments since 1992

Table 4-1 summarizes the Land Use Plan Actions from the 1992 Comprehensive Plan and identifies which of these have been accomplished.

Table 4-1. Accomplishments of the 1992 Comprehensive Plan

Action	1992 Actions	Accomplishments and Changes
Preserving and Increasing Employment Opportunities		
ED-1	Adopt a competitive ranking system for Revolving Loan Fund and other city assistance to encourage diversification in the local economy.	This action was not accomplished.
ED-2	Identify growth industries with national markets that would compliment Cranston's existing economic base, and promote the location of specific businesses in the City through a targeted marketing effort.	This action was not accomplished.
ED-3	Develop and fund customized job training for employees of area manufacturers who are expanding their activities or changing their product lines, using JTPA funding and leveraging private funds wherever possible.	Ongoing.
ED-4	Continue to fund and present training programs on job readiness skills, English as a Second Language, and other programs that directly address the perceived inadequacies of the available workforce in the area.	Ongoing but not focused on specific retraining.
ED-5	Participate in outreach efforts to recruit Cranston residents who are welfare-dependant parents into the State's program, which assists in the transition to gainful employment.	Acted upon by others.
ED-6	Promote the development of an office/commercial incubator, to provide space and services to startup and early-stage businesses.	This action was not accomplished.
ED-7	Develop in cooperation with other public and private entities a structured, publicized entrepreneurial assistance program, which provides entrepreneurs with networking opportunities and practical education in business management.	This action was not accomplished.
ED-8	In cooperation with URI and other area colleges and universities, create a technical assistance, technology transfer network to assist research-and-development oriented small businesses.	Acted upon by others.
Importing Capital and Expanding Cranston's Economic Base		
ED-9	Cosponsor export seminars and trade missions for Cranston manufacturers and other prospective exporters with the U.S. Department of Commerce, the State Economic Development Department, freight forwarders and customs brokers, and the City and Port of Providence.	This action was not accomplished.
ED-10	Monitor information from public and private sources on overseas markets for manufactured goods. Identify Cranston-based manufacturers of such goods and alert them to sales opportunities.	This action was not accomplished.

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ED-11	Maintain and regularly update a database of information on industrial space for lease, especially that which is available in small increments suitable for start-up industries.	Ongoing with variable success.
ED-12	Continue providing hands-on assistance to growing businesses with financing, permitting, and other needs.	Ongoing.
Expanding the Industrial and Commercial Tax Base		
ED-13	Provide information regularly to private industrial landowners regarding prevailing prices in the regional marketplace for industrial land to encourage them to set reasonable asking prices for their properties.	Discontinued.
ED-14	Review sewer line extension and roadway acceptance policies to ensure that they promote the type and configuration of development that is envisioned for western Cranston in the Comprehensive Plan.	Ongoing.
Industrial and Commercial Revitalization		
ED-15	Create a Providence/Cranston Redevelopment Agency responsible for comprehensive redevelopment of the Fields Point area for mixed use, tourism, and recreation-focused development.	This action is no longer relevant.
ED-16	Adopt interim zoning of the Fields Point area to conform to new zoning recently adopted by the City of Providence.	This action is no longer relevant.
ED-17	Incorporate previously developed Fields Point concept plans to encourage a mixed-use redevelopment at the site.	This action is no longer relevant.
ED-18	Pursue opportunities to use the buildings at the northern end of the Narragansett Brewery site for job-creating uses compatible with surrounding neighborhoods.	Narragansett Brewery site is substantially developed. Trolley Barn site is vacant.
ED-19	Conduct, or encourage the Falstaff Brewing Company to conduct a feasibility study for a mixed-use development in the Tongue Pond area of the Narragansett Brewery Property.	Narragansett Brewery site is substantially developed. Trolley Barn site is vacant.
ED-20	Study alternatives for traffic access to and from the Boy's Training School site that would prevent further traffic congestion and permit redevelopment of the site for appropriately scaled, low-traffic volume corporate headquarters, R&D campus or office development.	Site currently undergoing redevelopment as a mixed-use complex.
ED-21	Promote development at the Boy's Training School through the securing of an option or other means for a taxable and job creating-use, taking into consideration the historic significance of certain structures on the site.	Redevelopment plan approved.
Commercial Development along Major Arterials		
ED-22	Develop design guidelines for developers' reference, which address signage and sign placement, landscaping, size and screening of parking areas, pedestrian links, and driveway placement.	Implemented for certain size projects.
Coordination with the Town of Johnston		
ED-23	Encourage the Town of Johnston to rezone property on the north side of Plainfield Pike for industrial uses.	This action was not accomplished.
ED-24	Keep planning officials in Town of Johnston informed of changes in zoning requirements and encourage them to adopt similar changes.	This action was not accomplished.



Part II. Current Conditions and Issues

This section discusses prevailing economic conditions in Cranston, focusing on fiscal, employment, demographics, and real estate market conditions. These basic factors define the context for economic development and help shape appropriate economic development strategies. For more in-depth discussions relating to the summary of conditions and issues, please refer to the separate economic analysis prepared for this Comprehensive Plan.

Economic Assets

Cranston offers the following competitive economic advantages:

- High-end features: Cranston offers both rural and waterfront locations that provide aesthetic and recreational amenities and can attract investments from high-end individuals and businesses.
- Urban Ventures: Rhode Island's Urban Ventures program offers assistance to small business entrepreneurs. The program functions as an "incubator without walls," recognizing that fledgling businesses in the current economy are increasingly in need of hands-on business counseling and intellectual and capital resources. Under the Urban Ventures program, qualified business entrepreneurs receive company-specific counseling and assistance. This program provides Cranston and its entrepreneurs with a strong tool for promoting success among new businesses and industry.
- Direct proximity to Providence: Cranston offers convenient access to assets such as educational institutions (Brown University, Johnson & Wales, Rhode Island School of Design, Rhode Island College, Providence College, and the University of Rhode Island), the State capital, and the region's Central Business District.
- Access: Cranston offers convenient access to T.F. Green Airport, a rapidly growing aviation center serving major airlines, the AMTRAK line running through the City, and direct access to the major interstates 95 and 295.

Fiscal Performance

In fiscal year 2004, the City's Comprehensive Annual Financial Report shows that the City achieved a revenue surplus of \$16 million. This reverses a previous pattern wherein revenues had fallen short of expenditures, and represents the largest operating surplus of any community in Rhode Island. While recent increases in property values indicate that such surpluses may be sustainable, escalating expenses for items such as health benefits and retirement contributions are likely to exert continued pressure on municipal budgets.

Unemployment

Unemployment in Cranston has fallen from the 8 to 9 percent range in the early 1990s, to approximately 4 to 5 percent in recent years. These levels have been consistently lower than in the overall Providence metropolitan area. Unemployment in Cranston and the metro area have been below national levels in recent years, but higher than national levels in the 1990s. This comparative pattern reflects the area's poor economic performance during the economic recession of the early 1990s, its low participation in the economic boom of the late 1990s, and – as a result – its slightly milder decline since 2000.

Economic Base

An analysis of Providence County's economic base reveals the following:

- Overall employment has increased at annual rates of roughly 0.6 percent over the last 20 years. Over the last three years -- a period of national economic decline -- employment declined by just 0.2 percent per year.
- Education and health care services represents the largest component of Providence County's economy, with about 64,500 jobs comprising 22 percent of total employment. This sector has also shown relatively high growth rates of

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approximately two to three percent per year, and forecasts anticipate continued growth in this industry.

- Professional and business services industries comprise about 33,000 jobs, which is at a ratio one-tenth lower than the national rate. However, this sector is the fastest growing, with a projected annual growth rate of 2.2 percent over the next five years.
- Manufacturing, which provided the largest source of employment in 1983, has declined consistently over the last twenty years. Manufacturing employment losses accelerated over the last three years, and this longstanding pattern of decline is expected to continue.
- In addition to the above, the Providence County economy shows the influence of the national economy in driving job growth in Providence County. As national trends improve jobs in education/health, leisure/hospitality and professional/business services, the region has gained jobs in similar fashion. However, this growth has been offset, by declines in the manufacturing and trade sector jobs.

Special Niches: Biotechnology

- In addition to the foregoing, the biotechnology industry may offer potential niches for economic development in Cranston. A study on the biopharmaceutical industry prepared by the Milken Institute identifies Rhode Island as a promising state for strong job growth in consideration of several factors, including the state's high concentration of workers in this industry, its research activity, and its human and capital infrastructure. While none of the state's various biotechnology research or business programs focus specifically on Cranston, Cranston offers a central location in the state and good access to an urban labor force. Consequently, future development endeavors may feature biotechnological research and/or production facilities.

Table 4.2 Comparative Job Distributions

<u>Thousands of Jobs</u>	Providence County		US	Location
	#	%	%	<u>Quotient</u>
Natural Resources & Mining	0.07	0.0%	0.4%	0.05
Construction	12.85	4.3%	5.2%	0.83
Manufacturing	36.00	12.1%	11.3%	1.07
Food Manufacturing	2.42	0.8%	1.2%	0.70
Textile Mills	2.48	0.8%	0.2%	4.04
Plastics and Rubber Products Manufacturing	2.40	0.8%	0.6%	1.26
Primary Metal Manufacturing	2.07	0.7%	0.4%	1.88
Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing	5.73	1.9%	1.1%	1.70
Furniture and Related Product Manufacturing	1.03	0.3%	0.4%	0.78
Miscellaneous Manufacturing	10.00	3.4%	0.5%	6.48
Wholesale Trade	11.84	4.0%	4.3%	0.93
Retail Trade	28.28	9.5%	11.5%	0.83
Transportation, Warehousing, & Utilities	6.45	2.2%	3.6%	0.60
Information	7.20	2.4%	2.5%	0.96
Financial Activities	22.72	7.7%	6.1%	1.25
Professional & Business Services	32.88	11.1%	12.3%	0.90
Education & Health Services	64.54	21.7%	12.7%	1.71
Health Care and Social Assistance	50.91	17.2%	10.7%	1.61
Leisure & Hospitality	21.40	7.2%	9.3%	0.78
Accommodation and Food Services	18.20	6.1%	8.0%	0.77
Other Services (except Public Administration)	14.00	4.7%	4.1%	1.15
Government	38.53	13.0%	16.5%	0.79
Total Nonfarm	296.75	100.0%	100.0%	1.00

Note: The Location Quotient is the ratio of local jobs to national jobs in each sector. Highest ratios are highlighted.

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Demographic Trends

National demographic forecasting firms Claritas, Inc., and Geovue, Inc. estimate that from 1990 to 2004, population and households in Cranston have increased at rates ranging from 0.15 percent to 0.25 percent annually, with growth rates anticipated at less than 0.25 percent per year over the next five years according to Statewide Planning, May 2004.

Cranston's eastern and central census tracts contain approximately two-thirds of the City's population and nearly three-quarters of its households. The City's western census tracts, however, have achieved relatively rapid growth. Since 1990, western Cranston's population and households have grown at 2.9 percent and 3.0 percent annually. Over the next five years this rapid growth is expected to decelerate slightly, to 2.2 percent and 2.3 percent.

Profiles

Cranston's labor force fits two different profiles. Central Cranston's labor force closely approximates the overall Providence County labor force, while the City's eastern and western populations fit more affluent, professional profiles. In Central Cranston, 22 percent of those aged 25 or older have attained a four-year college degree, and 32 percent are employed in management or professional occupations. In contrast, in Eastern Cranston and, to an even greater degree, western

Cranston, 31.5 and 36 percent have earned bachelors' degrees, and 38 and 46 percent work in management and professional positions. In general, Central Cranston's work force is associated with the region's declining manufacturing base. While these workers have achieved various manufacturing skills, they are aligned with manufacturing uses which may not offer good opportunities for future investment.

Industrial Real Estate Conditions

Overview

Cranston's industrial real estate market is comprised of three areas: the Howard Industrial Park in the southern part of the City between I-95 and Pontiac Avenue; the western Cranston area along Plainfield Pike/ Rt. 295; and the City's aging industrial properties concentrated

along major thoroughfares such as I-95, Rt. 10, Elmwood Avenue, Wellington Avenue, and Cranston Street.

Table 4.3 Comparative Profiles: Selected Areas in 2000

	Providence County	Cranston	Western Cranston	Central Cranston	East/ Elmwood	Scituate	Warwick
Total Population	621,602	79,269	10,813	52,554	12,217	10,324	85,808
Age 25+ w/Bach. Degree or higher	21.3%	24.5%	36.1%	21.8%	31.5%	30.9%	24.5%
Occupations							
Management/Professional	31.2%	35.0%	45.9%	31.8%	38.4%	40.4%	33.6%
Service	15.8%	15.4%	11.1%	16.5%	14.4%	13.7%	15.4%
Sales/Office	27.3%	29.4%	30.3%	29.3%	29.0%	25.4%	30.0%
Production/Transportation	18.1%	10.1%	7.9%	19.7%	12.5%	10.4%	13.1%
Median Household Income	\$37,135	\$44,213	\$73,078	\$39,920	\$43,333	\$60,788	\$46,483

Source: U.S. Census

Land Supply

Western Cranston offers the primary supply of vacant developable land for further industrial development; industrial real estate brokers estimate that western Cranston contains less than 75 acres of remaining acreage for industrial development.

Competition

Cranston competes with other Rhode Island industrial parks for regional development. The Highland Corporate Parks (in Cumberland and Woonsocket) comprise one source of competition for high-end industrial development in this area. Approximately 10 acres remain available in this park. Other sources of competition come from parks at Quonset Point in North Kingstown and West Greenwich business-park. Unlike northern Rhode Island parks, these parks are not convenient to the Massachusetts market, but are oriented to the comparatively high-end executive labor force in southern Rhode Island. Finally, planned industrial parks in Johnston, Smithfield, and Burrillville will offer additional acreage with highway access; these will compete with land areas in western Cranston. Over a long-term, 20-year time frame, however, northern Rhode Island may face a scarcity of land to accommodate new or existing industrial businesses seeking additional space in Rhode Island.

Retail Market Conditions

Overview

Independent retailers in small strip centers along the City's various thoroughfares and districts, as well as clusters of franchise retailers concentrated in larger shopping centers serve the Cranston retail market.

The Garden City Center

The Garden City Center is the largest retail center in Cranston and has consistently maintained high occupancy rates and high lease rates, with increasing gross sales and an upscale tenant profile. While not configured as an enclosed mall, Garden City Center competes for regional market shares against the Warwick Mall and Providence Place Mall.

Market Niche Findings

Cranston captures a substantial net inflow of retail spending. This reflects its status as a regional retail destination and is consistent with the Garden City Center's finding that it serves a market area extending well beyond Cranston's borders. Within the overall retail envelope, the

City sustains a significant net outflow of household spending in the general merchandise category. This reflects Cranston's lack of department stores and "warehouse club" stores.

Major Locations and New Development

During the 1990s, the retail market experienced substantial development of new big box retailers along Route 2 in southern Cranston as well as Warwick. The Cranston Parkade, which is the site of the former Narragansett Brewery, also opened in this general time frame. Two other projects that will exert new impacts on the Cranston retail market include the Chapel View project adjacent to Garden City Center and the Park Theater Renovation project. Both of these new projects will enhance Cranston's diversity and critical mass of retail and entertainment-related offerings, and will thereby enhance the City's array of amenities and desirability as a favorable retail business location.

Office Market Conditions

Downtown Providence serves as the region's dominant office location. Suburban office space has performed at levels comparable to the CBD market. Within the suburban markets, the West Bay submarket features the region's lowest vacancy rates and Warwick offers this region's prime location for suburban office space. Anecdotal testimony provided by commercial brokers indicates that most high-quality office buildings in Warwick maintain healthy occupancy rates, with lease rates of roughly \$20 per square foot.

Cranston itself contains a limited inventory of office buildings. Many of the city's office tenants occupy space in industrial buildings, in retail centers, and in residential homes converted to office use along major commercial streets.

Among the more prominent leased office buildings, the largest contain approximately 40,000 to 50,000 square feet. Properties along Reservoir Avenue or near the Garden City Center seek 'Class A' lease rates of \$18 to \$20 per square foot on a gross basis (excluding electricity). Most of these maintain high occupancy rates, generally in excess of 90 percent. These rates are roughly comparable to those sought in other locations such as Highland Corporate Park and other suburban office locations such as Warwick.

Lodging Market Conditions

The local lodging market is concentrated in Providence and Warwick; Cranston itself currently contains one lodging facility, a 60-room Days Inn located adjacent to the Garden City Center. In recent years, well-situated lodging facilities in Providence have achieved healthy occupancy rates. In the suburban market, proximity to office properties and the TF Green Airport give Warwick a prime location for lodging. The total inventory in this market (combining Warwick properties with the Cranston Days Inn) comprises 1,968 rooms in 15 properties. Of this total, 692 rooms (35 percent) in six properties have opened since 2000. In addition, three properties containing a total of 300 rooms have opened in West Warwick since 1997. Despite these substantial additions to the local supply and despite recent periods of severely adverse conditions for the travel and lodging industries, the market has maintained a consistently healthy level of performance.

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Potential Development Opportunities

Industrial Land

Despite the competitive disadvantages noted above, Cranston's available buildable land and its central location within Rhode Island will continue to provide advantages for potential manufacturing as well as distribution facilities. Within Cranston, western Cranston offers the primary location for new industrial development. The supply of developable land, however, is constrained, and the City may face shortages over the next ten-years.

Retail Opportunities

Cranston offers potential development opportunities for:

- Neighborhood or community convenience retail serving the growing markets in western Cranston and Scituate.
- Leisure and/or entertainment-related businesses located near the Park Theater in Rolfe Square as well as in the emerging retail destination around the Garden City Center.

Existing Retailers

The independently operated businesses located along many of Cranston's major commercial streets will continue to face competition from shopping centers and their adjacent properties, but many will continue to maintain local niches serving their immediately surrounding communities and/or serving broader markets in narrow product/service lines.

Potential Office Opportunity

The West Bay portion of the suburban Providence market maintains high occupancy rates and competitive lease rates, even as new office development continues. Within this context, Cranston's limited inventory of office properties has also delivered healthy performances, comparable to those in Warwick. These performances indicate that the office market may present opportunities for new development in Cranston. Such development would probably target mid-rise buildings with 40,000 to 80,000 square feet. While the number of office buildings in Cranston is currently relatively low compared to the surrounding municipalities, there are significant opportunities for new office development in Cranston. The vacant developable land for Class-A office park development may be difficult to assemble,

however, strategically situated, highway-accessible land could offer an attractive redevelopment opportunity. If Cranston wishes to encourage office development, the City's zoning ordinance needs to be amended to allow an increase in building height. Potential Lodging Opportunity

Cranston currently offers neither office concentrations nor visitor destinations, and therefore lacks some of the location factors necessary to attract new lodging development. Nonetheless, Cranston's location between Providence and Warwick gives it convenient proximity to office markets and meeting facilities, TF Green Airport, and the key highways serving the region. Given strategically situated land for redevelopment, combined with the potential for a mix of other commercial uses, Cranston could offer desirable locations for new hotel development.

Other Economic Development Issues

Real Estate Investment vs. Current Labor Profiles

Potential development or redevelopment opportunities for new office development, lodging development, or retail/entertainment-related development will enhance property values and thereby enrich the City's tax base. It is unlikely, however, that such investments would provide new jobs that would match the skills of much of the existing labor force. The manufacturing-oriented employment base of the past will continue to decline, and the stronger opportunities for future development will target services-oriented employers rather than manufacturers.

Redevelopment versus New Development

Urban locations in Central and Eastern Cranston (near Garden City Center, Rolfe Square, Interstates 95 and 295) offer potential opportunities for relatively high-end projects focusing on retail, office, and mixed-use development projects. In competing for capital, however, these will face cost disadvantages as compared to new developments on vacant land in western Cranston.

Labor Skills

Tenants in new real estate projects are likely to be office-based or retail businesses. While the production-oriented labor force in Central Cranston may not be suitable for many of these businesses, this labor force nonetheless offers a resource that is essential and increasingly

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scarce in places such as neighboring Massachusetts; where Cranston can offer access to labor training programs, it may be able to capture prospective businesses seeking new facility locations.

Regulatory Considerations

For the most part, developers in Cranston maintain local or regional profiles; many are long-standing property owners seeking to improve existing buildings. In such endeavors, these developers must address regulatory practices that have changed substantially in recent decades. As a result, for many developers and owners, particularly local property owners seeking to improve their properties, the current regulatory processes can be confusing and time consuming. This is particularly true for redevelopment projects, which often involve nonconforming uses, undersized lots, obsolete buildings, and other such issues.

Site Location Requirements

High-quality developments will seek locations that will be attractive to high-rent tenants. In Cranston, such locations will require either large tracts of undeveloped land (distinguishable from older, lower-end properties) or large-scale clearance/renovation of older properties.

Smart Growth

Applying smart growth to economic development strategies could provide multiple benefits to the community. The discussion on smart growth is expanded within the Land Use Element of the Plan, but the three components of development are again presented here.

To promote the concept in Cranston, three new districts are proposed to accommodate smart growth development in key locations:

Mixed-use Planned Development – Low Intensity (MPD-L)

This mixed-use zone would be suited for townhouses, with some first floor retail (up to 20%), and 35'-40' building heights. Suitable for transition areas and improved when adjacent to public transportation. It is also appropriate for maintaining open space areas as part of conservation efforts.

Mixed-use Planned Development – Medium Intensity (MPD-M)

This mixed-use zone would be suited for a retail district with commercial and residential on upper floors and with a minimum of two stories. The MPD-M district is suitable for revitalizing and expanding

village centers, and would be improved when adjacent to public transportation. Building heights would be approximately 35' - 40'.

Mixed-use Planned Development – High Intensity (MPD-H)

This mixed-use zone would be suited for predominantly mixed commercial development with live/work space or artists' lofts, and 45'-50' building heights. It would encourage significant redevelopment and would be more suitable when adjacent to public transportation

It should be noted that the current City ordinances limit building height to 35', except in Mixed Use Planned Districts, where the City Council has discretion to permit higher buildings. A building height of 35' discourages quality office development.



Part III. Strategies and Actions

The strategies and actions for Economic Development in this Comprehensive Plan are first focused on actions to improve the tax base using current market conditions and land opportunities. Key to the success of the projects is the application of Smart Growth concepts to ensure the long-term success and improved physical planning of Cranston.

Second, the Plan calls for shoring up the existing neighborhood and village commercial districts and creating design guidelines that will set the framework for both public and private projects in these areas. These design guidelines will define the traditional design concepts that have proven to be effective in creating dynamic and attractive areas supportive to businesses and their customers and neighbors.

The Plan also highlights some of the job training programs promoted in the 1992 Plan. These training programs continue to be very important, as there are still many workers in the city reliant on manufacturing jobs. As manufacturing continues to decline, however, new skill sets will be required for the emerging industries.

A summary of the proposed actions, time frames, and responsibilities for this element is provided at the end of this section.

Target High End Business Growth

High-end business niches offer potential opportunities for Cranston. Three findings support this conclusion:

Market Orientation

In the local economy, growth is focused in office-oriented sectors. These sectors include professional, service-oriented businesses such as education, health care, and professional/business services. In contrast, manufacturing, Providence County's largest source of employment in 1983, has declined consistently over the last 20 years.

Manufacturing employment losses accelerated over the last three years, and this longstanding pattern of decline is expected to continue.

Market Performance

In addition to positive employment indicators, the office market has achieved strong performances in the general region. The West Bay portion of the suburban Providence market maintains high occupancy rates and competitive lease rates, even as new office development continues to add new supply. Within this context, Cranston's limited inventory of office properties has also delivered healthy performances as identified in the existing conditions section. The high lease rates are roughly comparable to those sought in other locations such as Highland Corporate Park and other suburban office locations such as Warwick. Most tenants in these buildings fit two categories:

- Medical-related businesses; and
- Professional service providers engaged in legal, real estate, insurance, and financial services; most of these occupy relatively small (less than 10,000 square feet) spaces and serve household – as opposed to corporate – clientele.

Prospective office development would probably target mid-rise buildings with 40,000 to 80,000 square feet. As previously mentioned, highway accessible land is likely to be attractive to prospective office developers in Cranston.

Biotechnology

Biotechnology offers potential as a high-end business niche that Cranston can capitalize on due to New England's prominence in this industry. There is potential for increased regional manufacturing activity as new drugs emerge from the R&D pipelines and Rhode Island's state and university-based programs focused on biotechnology issues. A recent study prepared by the Milken Institute

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forecasts Rhode Island biopharmaceutical employment to more than triple over the next ten years, and industry output to increase five-fold.

Target Large-Scale Redevelopment

In seeking to capitalize on potential development opportunities such as those described above, the developers required for such opportunities will target large-scale, strategically situated sites (or otherwise notable properties such as historic buildings) where they can provide visibility, create high-quality environments, generate market synergies, and maximize the efficiency of their investments. Such locations would require the redevelopment of sites situated close to I-95 or I-295.

An important redevelopment option that meets multiple goals of this Plan for job creation, tax base improvement, and improved land use is the Elmwood/Wellington Avenue area Transit-Oriented Development concept. Detail on this redevelopment concept, with a sketch plan, is included in the Land Use Element.

Pastore Center

The Pastore Center has excellent location and access advantages. This, combined with the recent developments in the Center and the surrounding area make the few remaining vacant parcels on the fringe of the Pastore Center attractive development opportunities. Development of these parcels is discussed further in the Land Use Element of this Plan.

Transit Oriented Development

A long-term option that would spur development and redevelopment projects and have significant economic benefits for Cranston is an additional rail station. The City should initiate a feasibility study in coordination with RIDOT, Warwick, and North Kingstown for a new station and Transit Oriented Development (TOD) planning effort as a component of Cranston's economic development. This option is discussed further in the Circulation Element of this Plan.

Neighborhood Commercial Centers

Existing Commercial Areas

The independently operated businesses located in many of Cranston's major commercial areas will continue to face competition from shopping centers but many will continue to maintain local niches

serving their immediately surrounding communities and/or serving broader markets in narrow product/service lines. A discussion on ways to improve the existing centers is expanded in the Land Use Element of this Plan.

Western Cranston

Western Cranston is underserved by retail development. New retail developments seeking to serve this market must be situated along the area's major traffic routes. In allocating land for prospective retail developments, the City should bear in mind two factors:

Income Profile Supports Quality Developments

Given the income profiles as well as the growth potential in this market, well-situated new developments could support healthy lease rates. Where this occurs, the City will be able to impose design standards that can preserve elements of the area's relatively rural character.

Potential Size

Relatively small-scale centers (e.g., less than 20,000 square feet of building space on one acre or less) may enable the City to preserve rural character, however, larger projects (e.g., 5-10 acres or more) are more likely to:

- Attract high-quality developers who will be more likely to create relatively upscale environments.
- Attract higher-quality tenants, which often seek direct proximity to a critical mass of trip-generating tenants.
- Generate fewer traffic movements to and from the street, as such centers are more likely to contain multiple destinations.
- Incorporate mixed-use "village" settings that may combine elements such as housing, small office areas, and ground floor retail uses.

Given the above considerations, a small center located strategically to serve the western Cranston market is preferred. The advantage of limiting the number and area of commercial centers in western Cranston is that impacts on the area's rural character will be minimized.

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Complement Existing Small Business Assistance Programs

People embarking on new business ventures currently have access to resources at Rhode Island small business assistance agencies such as Service Core of Retired Executives (SCORE), the Rhode Island Small Business Development Center, and the Urban Ventures program. These organizations offer counseling and business knowledge to small businesses throughout the state. The City should provide additional, broad-based small business assistance to complement these programs. Such assistance might involve the following:

- Creation of a business incubator facility. In such space, incubator tenants would pay nominal or no rent and would share access to telecommunications systems, office equipment, and support staff, and, perhaps most important, direct access to business counselors (and other entrepreneurs) familiar with available resources, sources of financing, and business services. The general experience of such facilities is that most “graduates” of the incubator are likely to maintain locations in the incubator’s community.
- As an alternative to an incubator facility, creation of a broad-based “incubator without walls” – similar to Urban Ventures but with a broader range of application. As an example of the effectiveness of such programs, in Hastings, Minnesota, the Hastings Enterprise Facilitation program sought to address the high failure rate, commonly cited at 80 percent on a national basis, of new businesses. Hastings’ program coordinators selected approximately 30 startup businesses (from among 280 applicants). Of these, 27 remained in business after five years. Such businesses encompassed the full range of retail, service, and manufacturing activities. The Enterprise Facilitation program provided services in preparing and refining business plans, knowledge regarding business procedures (regulations, permit processes, costs), and most important, a network of contacts through a 12-member board. This board, comprising members of the local business community, helped build businesses by providing information, general advice, and contacts with service providers, financing sources, marketing venues, and clientele.

- Application of the City’s revolving fund to guarantee financial obligations such as loans or property leases. Such use of the revolving fund enables the City to maximize its leverage in facilitating private business’s access to private capital.
- Promulgation of regulations that accommodate certain home-based businesses. While relevant statistical documentation is unavailable, home renovations increasingly provide home office spaces for either working at home or for home-based businesses. While ordinances should continue to preserve the residential character of neighborhoods (with limitations addressing traffic, parking, types of businesses, signage, production/storage functions, etc.), an ability to conduct business, particularly “idea-driven” businesses from home, can remove significant barriers to new business formation and thereby help foster entrepreneurial enterprise.
- Improved access to real estate developers/investors. A focus on developers rather than businesses provides efficiencies in that fairly limited pools of developers (and their brokers) solicit tenants from a much larger pool of businesses located outside as well as inside the local community. While real estate developers are often not structured as traditional “companies,” many are nonetheless small businesses that require assistance. Therefore, the small business assistance should include assistance and services (e.g., counseling regarding approval processes, likely costs, business planning, key service providers, sources of capital, etc.) to local developers as well as property owners contemplating new investments in property improvements.

Improve the “Business-Friendliness” of the City’s Regulatory Climate

The City should take a proactive stance in outreach and communication with the development and business communities. Current practices in planning, development and development regulation periodically change. Recognizing that these changes have occurred, the City should take proactive measures to prepare prospective developers for applicable approval procedures and key issues, and thereby ensure a smoother process. The City may promulgate such measures through its business assistance agency

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(see preceding recommendation) or through its existing departments and agencies.

Such measures may include:

- Continue the practice of meeting with developers to provide preliminary staff input regarding approval processes, requirements, potential obstacles, and suggestions regarding prospective proposals;
- Preparation of reader-friendly “development handbooks” that explain the various steps of the approval process. Such handbooks should be made available electronically in the form of interactive programs that can walk prospective developers through various types of approval processes;
- Surveys of the development community to elicit feedback regarding approval procedures and substantive regulations;
- Amended land use regulations to provide incentives for property owners and developers to improve outdated nonconforming uses. Such investments are often more costly than new construction on vacant land; the costs of updating properties to come into compliance with current regulations adds further to the costs of development. Such redevelopment investments should be encouraged. In encouraging these investments, City policies and ordinances should offer some form of relief. Where qualifying criteria (character, compatibility, value added, affordable housing, etc.) are satisfied, such relief can take the form of zoning exceptions, density bonuses, impact fees, and other such costs.

Provide Specific Job Training

Work with the State to develop and fund customized job training for employees of existing area manufacturers seeking to expand activities, alter processes, change, or introduce new product lines. This recommendation was presented in the 1992 plan and remains important to business retention and to the facilitation of a smooth transition (rather than dislocation) to the City’s future economic base.

It should be noted that assistance with such programs has been available since 1994 through the existing Providence/Cranston Regional Employment & Training Board. The development of

additional programs need not proceed in anticipation of specific needs. Rather, such programs should be contingent on the City’s ability to identify a specific business cluster seeking labor with specific needs, for instance, where an existing manufacturing cluster targets new processes needed to sustain growth or where new industries (e.g., biotechnological, medical devices, etc.), seek specified skill sets.

Economic Development Action Program

Table 4-2. Summary of the Proposed Actions and Responsibilities for this Plan

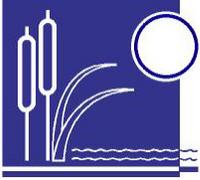
	Action	Responsibility
Matching Jobs and Workers		
ED-1	Establish a marketing program: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact local and regional chambers of commerce • Coordinate with RIEDC • Offer participation of City staff and use of City funds. 	Economic Development Dept.
ED-2	Continue support of the Urban Ventures program: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use program to encourage new small businesses. 	Economic Development Dept.
ED-3	Create programs through institutions to match job seekers and businesses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek cooperation with educational institutions in the area; URI, RIC, CCRI, Johnson & Wales and other area colleges. 	Economic Development Dept.
Preserving and Increasing Employment Opportunities		
ED-4	Adopt a competitive ranking system for Revolving Loan Fund: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Also provide other city assistance • Encourage diversification in the local economy. 	Economic Development Dept.
ED-5	Identify growth industries with national markets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliment Cranston's existing economic base • Promote the location of specific businesses in the City through a targeted marketing effort. 	Economic Development Dept.
ED-6	Continue to develop and fund customized job training: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target for employees of area manufacturers who are expanding their activities or changing their product lines • Use JTPA funding and leveraging private funds wherever possible. 	Economic Development Dept.
ED-7	Continue to fund and present training programs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-job readiness skills • English as a Second Language • Other programs that directly address the perceived inadequacies of the available workforce in the area • Consider focusing efforts on developing job sectors. 	Economic Development Dept.
ED-8	Promote the development of an office/commercial incubator: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide space and services to startup and early-stage businesses. 	Economic Development Dept.
ED-9	Develop a structured, publicized entrepreneurial assistance program: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop in cooperation with other public and private entities, which provide entrepreneurs with networking opportunities and practical education in business management. 	Economic Development Dept.

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Importing Capital and Expanding Cranston's Economic Base		
ED-10	Co-sponsor export seminars and trade missions for Cranston manufacturers and other prospective exporters: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target sectors associated with the U.S. Department of Commerce, the State Economic Development Department, freight forwarders and customs brokers, and the City and Port of Providence. 	Economic Development Dept.
ED-11	Monitor information from public and private sources on overseas markets for manufactured goods: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify Cranston-based manufacturers of such goods and alert them to sales opportunities. 	Economic Development Dept.
ED-12	Maintain and regularly update a database of information on industrial space for lease: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on space, which is available in small increments suitable for start-up industries. 	Economic Development Dept.
ED-13	Continue providing hands-on assistance to growing businesses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide assistance with financing, permitting, and other needs. 	Economic Development Dept.
Targets for Smart Growth Projects		
ED-14	Target large-scale, smart growth redevelopment opportunities at strategic locations to accommodate mixed-use, transit-oriented development. Focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Properties along I-95 such as the Wellington/Elmwood industrial area • Properties at the I-295/Rt. 37 intersection. 	Economic Development Dept. Planning Department
ED-15	Target medium-scale, smart growth redevelopment opportunities. Consider additional locations near: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Garden City Center • Rolfe Square • Knightsville • Along I-95 and I-295. 	Economic Development Dept. Planning Department
ED-16	Target high-end business growth in professional, service-oriented businesses, and the markets for office space.	Economic Development Dept. Planning Department
ED-17	Target grocery-anchored, neighborhood or community shopping centers serving the growing markets in western Cranston and Scituate.	Economic Development Dept. Planning Department
Targets for Industrial and Commercial Projects		
ED-18	Target hotel and lodging accommodations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on locations where there is easy access to the T.F. Green airport. 	Economic Development Dept. Planning Department
ED-19	Target leisure and/or entertainment-related businesses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider areas near the Park Theater in Rolfe Square as well as in the emerging retail destination around the Garden City Center. 	Economic Development Dept. Planning Department
ED-20	Assist the State in redeveloping state properties at the Pastore Center: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on private, commercial components. 	Economic Development Dept. Planning Department
ED-21	Review sewer line extension and roadway acceptance policies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the policies promote the type of development planned for western Cranston. 	City Council Planning Commission Planning Department

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Revitalization Projects		
ED-22	<p>Target improvement of neighborhood commercial centers to service their market area and to reduce congestion for cross-town traffic. New neighborhood village center developments should be focused at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scituate Avenue and Pippin Orchard Road • Phenix Avenue and Natick Avenue. • Redevelopment of neighborhood centers should continue to occur at Pawtuxet Village, Knightsville, and Rolfe Square. 	Planning Department
ED-23	<p>Distinguish between each commercial center:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop design guidelines for public properties • Include signage, street furniture, landscaping, public parking areas, bicycle ways, and sidewalks. 	Planning Department
ED-24	<p>Develop design guidelines for site development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address different conditions and smart growth goals • Distinguish between each type of commercial area; major commercial center, village center, highway or arterial commercial • Development adjacent to transit. 	Economic Development Dept. Planning Department
Improved Business Climate		
ED-25	<p>Improve relations with developers, businesses, and property owners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with regulatory staff to proactively inform and assist developers in regulatory and approval processes 	City Council Planning Commission Planning Department
ED-26	Continue providing hands-on assistance to growing businesses with financing, permitting, and other needs.	Economic Development Dept.
Regional Coordination		
ED-27	Encourage the Town of Johnston to rezone property on the north side of Plainfield Pike for industrial uses.	Mayor City Council
ED-28	Keep planning officials in Town of Johnston informed of changes in zoning requirements and encourage them to adopt similar changes.	Mayor City Council Planning Commission Planning Department



Introduction to the Natural Resources Element

The protection of Cranston's natural resources is a common theme expressed throughout this Plan. While the methods, management techniques, and programs highlighted in the plan support protection, they are not designed to stop development. These policies enable development in ways that are compatible with protecting natural resources.

Key Challenges

The City is faced with funding and legal constraints, but also opportunities regarding the protection and use of its natural resources:

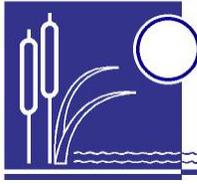
- There is a strong demand to develop remaining vacant lands, some of which have important natural resources.
- Residential development in western Cranston reduces natural habitat, consumes open land and impacts natural resources. New management programs and regulations are needed to manage development to preserve remaining resources.
- The Rise/Return sewer line and the new water line in Pippin Orchard Road increases pressure for more intensive land development in western Cranston, especially along Pippin Orchard Road.
- The City, State, several environmental and agricultural groups, and individuals have promoted the preservation of existing agricultural land by supporting local farming initiatives and co-ops.
- The City's urban ponds and streams could provide new recreation opportunities or simply visual relief; and,

- There are still open parcels that could link existing open space areas. Additional land acquisitions and easements are needed to complete these links.

Key Strategies

Practical solutions to the environmental challenges need to be implemented to ensure that the City can protect its natural resources while balancing this with real growth and maintenance of community character.

- Promotion of farm-based retail activities to protect against the loss of agricultural lands.
- Restoration plans that create buffer zones to protect the Pocasset and Pawtuxet Rivers.
- Adoption of new land use tools such as transfer of development rights.
- Adoptions of standards such as low impact development and other 'green' policies and techniques that enhance watersheds.
- Reinstate the City's community garden program in appropriate areas.



Part I - Summary and Accomplishments of the 1992 Plan

Introduction

The issues surrounding the Natural Resources element of the 1992 Comprehensive Plan focused on two themes:

Effective management of growth and change in the western half of Cranston.

A strategic approach to incremental change in the neighborhoods and commercial areas of eastern Cranston.

The 1992 Plan identified a series of issues that reflected the sentiment of these two themes. This section summarizes these issues and the approaches to address them. A table that identifies the goals and accomplishments of the 1992 Plan follows this summary.

Wastewater Management in Western Cranston

Most soil in western Cranston, where the land is un-sewered and undeveloped, is rated "severe," meaning it is more costly for a homeowner to build and operate an in-ground septic system. In soils with this designation, appropriate design, installation and maintenance are essential to protect natural systems. The 1992 Plan proposed both structural and management approaches to address this issue, which included installing sewer lines, developing a comprehensive septic system management program, and creating a Waste Water Management District.

Ground Water Quality and Supply

The far western areas of Cranston are dependent upon ground water. The 1992 Plan recommended that the City adopt Rhode Island Department of Health regulations that establish minimum criteria for yield and water quality for private wells in these areas.

Surface Water Quality

Water Quality Monitoring

The 1992 Plan reported that the water quality data for many of Cranston's rivers, ponds, and lakes was either not current or not being collected. The Plan recommended that the City work with the State to develop a water quality assessment and management study.

Point and Non-Point Source Water Pollution

Land-use activities were identified to adversely impact surface waters and the two watersheds in Cranston. Several water resource protection efforts were proposed for the City to implement.

Stormwater Management

Pollutants in stormwater runoff enter and degrade the quality of Cranston's surface waters and eventually enter Narragansett Bay. In addition, the most important watershed areas in Cranston are parts of larger watersheds that are in neighboring communities. These factors show that water quality is a regional responsibility that cannot be fully addressed at a local level. However, to address this issue, the 1992 Plan recommended establishing stormwater utilities, financed through user fees, as well as having inter-municipal cooperation with these communities.

Public Water Supply / Scituate Reservoir

The 1992 Plan recommended applying watershed protection measures to the small portion of the Scituate Reservoir's watershed, which is located in the northwest corner of Cranston. The Plan also proposed to implement the recommendations of the State's Division of Planning's Management Plan for the watershed.

Protection on Steep Slopes

Portions of western Cranston have been characterized as having moderately steep and undeveloped slopes which could be subject to significant erosion and runoff if they are developed. The 1992 Plan proposed development controls, specifically permitted coverage of lots based on lot size and average slope, in order to minimize disturbance within a development site.

Preservation of Existing Resources

Wildlife Habitat and Rare and Endangered Species

The 1992 Plan reported that there was no inventory of wildlife species and habitat in Cranston, specifically in western Cranston where there are many wetlands, ponds, streams, and forests. While there was one 'listed' species that deserves protection, state policy does not allow revealing specific locations to protect the listed species, unless a development project is proposed. The 1992 Plan advised the City to identify and prioritize critical habitat areas in order to provide adequate protection of the species that could inhabit the resources.

Farmland Preservation

Although western Cranston still retains parts of its scenic and rural character, this area has been losing its farmland and ties to its historical past as development occurs. Options for the City, as suggested in the 1992 Plan, advocated for farmland preservation through purchases or agricultural preservation restrictions.

Conservation Commission

The local Conservation Commission can play a key role in natural resource protection efforts. The 1992 Plan recommended that the Commission be revitalized and be more active by implementing annual and long-term actions.

Changes to the Plan since 1992

The Cranston City Council approved the following change to the 1992 Comprehensive Plan.

- Amended the language to allow municipal water systems into the watershed areas to address on-site well contamination problems or to permit cluster development.

1992 Plan Actions and Accomplishments

Table 5-1 summarizes the Natural Resources Actions from the 1992 Comprehensive Plan and identifies which of these have been accomplished.

Table 5-1. Accomplishments of the 1992 Comprehensive Plan

Action	1992 Actions	Accomplishments and Changes
Protection of Cranston's Natural and Environmental Resources		
NR-1	Develop an open space preservation strategy for western Cranston that will result in a coordinated preservation program, including the preservation of farmland and greenways.	The Historic Scenic Farm Loop in western Cranston was created to preserve scenic views and preserve farmlands and greenways, and serve as a focus for future land acquisitions.
NR-2	Enact regulatory mechanisms and incentives allowing the concentration of new development in compact areas, in order to facilitate the preservation of significant areas of open space and environmentally sensitive areas.	Regulations promoting cluster development were strengthened through the adoption of Residential Planned District (RPD) regulations.
NR-3	Identify and prioritize critical habitat areas in western Cranston such as locations of rare and endangered species. Use local zoning and land regulations to assess and mitigate development impacts on rare and endangered species and wildlife habitats.	This action was not accomplished.
NR-4	Acquire, where possible, vacant parcels of land for open space and to establish green corridors, particularly in areas abutting natural drainage ways.	The City acquired several tracts of land in western Cranston. These parcels have become part of the City's open space system and may be used for passive recreation or agricultural uses.
NR-5	Revitalize Cranston's Conservation Commission and charge it with recommending specific annual and long-term actions such as developing a volunteer water quality monitoring program, implementing open space protection measures, and conducting public education on such issues as wetlands values, septic system maintenance, household hazardous water disposal, and pesticide/fertilizer application, storage and disposal.	The Cranston Conservation Commission was re-established in May 1995 and meets on a regular basis to review subdivisions and land developments.
Wastewater Management in Western Cranston		
NR-6	Require that development plans which propose the installation of individual septic disposal systems be accompanied by an analysis which demonstrates that the septic system will be compatible with the properties of the soils in which it will be placed.	Incorporated under RIDEM OWTS permitting requirements.
NR-7	Develop a comprehensive septic system management program.	This action was not accomplished.
NR-8	Require that applicants for subdivision approval for septic system-dependent lots provide soils analyses demonstrating that the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management's standards for well leach field separation would be sufficient to isolate drinking wells from contamination threats.	No analysis is required because RIDEM regulates for this requirement.
NR-9	Require that all subdivision proposals that envision well-dependent lots be accompanied by pump test results, which verify conformity with RIDEM's Rules and Regulations relating to the Drilling of Drinking Water Wells.	This action was implemented as staff policy and needs to be incorporated into the subdivision regulations.

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Surface Water Quality		
NR-10	Conduct a study of Cranston's lakes and ponds in order to provide comprehensive, detailed, current data regarding water quality of the City's most important surface water resources as well as the pollutant sources impacting them.	Three ponds were studied in the late 1990's. No new policies have been implemented to date. Some ponds have been monitored through a program at the University of Rhode Island over the past several years.
NR-11	Develop in-depth management programs for specific high priority water bodies in order to improve water quality and foster increased recreational use.	This action was not accomplished.
NR-12	Work with the State, including the Pawtuxet River Authority and the University of Rhode Island, to establish a volunteer water quality monitoring program modeled after the Watershed Watch Program.	Water quality monitoring is being conducted at two locations.
NR-13	Implement the watershed protection strategies recommended in the State's Scituate Reservoir Management Plan in order to ensure the future quality of this water supply. (for itemized list of actions, see P.128 of the 1992 Comprehensive Plan)	This action was not accomplished.
NR-14	Work with Northern Rhode Island Conservation District to implement USDA Soil Conservation Service "Best Management Practices" (BMP's) for agricultural sites and livestock operations including proper application, storage, and disposal of pesticides and fertilizers.	This action was not accomplished.
NR-15	Set limits on the percentage of impervious surfaces in new developments.	This action was not accomplished.
NR-16	Adopt an Underground Storage Tank Ordinance.	This action was not accomplished.
NR-17	Ensure that municipal and state salt storage piles are adequately covered.	The city highway department has one salt storage area on Phenix Avenue, and it is not covered. There are no state salt storage areas in Cranston.
NR-18	Continue to work with state and federal agencies to conduct remediation at former industrial sites such as the Ciba-Geigy plant.	Remediation continues at the site.
NR-19	Enact Stormwater BMP's to guide the design, installation, and operation of erosion and sedimentation control in new residential subdivisions.	The City contracted with Fuss & O'Neil to prepare the necessary stormwater management provisions. RIDEM is currently in the process of updating their stormwater regulations.
NR-20	Work cooperatively with surrounding municipalities to create a stormwater management utility (or utilities) to generate funds to maintain erosion and stormwater management structures.	This action was not accomplished.
NR-21	Conduct a stormwater management study in order to establish a comprehensive stormwater management plan which addresses short- and long-term infrastructure and administrative needs.	The City contracted with Fuss & O'Neil to prepare the necessary stormwater management provisions. (Phase II non Point Source Pollution)



Part II - Current Conditions and Issues

Introduction

This section provides a summary of the existing conditions and key issues regarding the natural resources within the City. As a result of these findings, acquisition of open space parcels, protection of the inland and coastal waterfront for access, and preservation of agricultural land are seen as most important.

The natural resources of Cranston serve critical functions for the environment as well as provide recreation and scenic vistas. These resources, which include the rivers, ponds, wetlands, forests, and coastal features, all play an important part in preserving the ecology and water quality. They also define the landscape of Cranston. The use and management of these resources affect their short and long-term health, and determines their ability for long term survival.

The typical concerns are the values (such as water quality protection) and hazards (such as flooding), and the usual responses are acquisition or regulation. Consequently this section reviews recent land acquisitions and changes in regulatory programs. Note that the City has adopted a Hazard Mitigation Plan that includes review of flood hazards.

Recent Land Acquisition

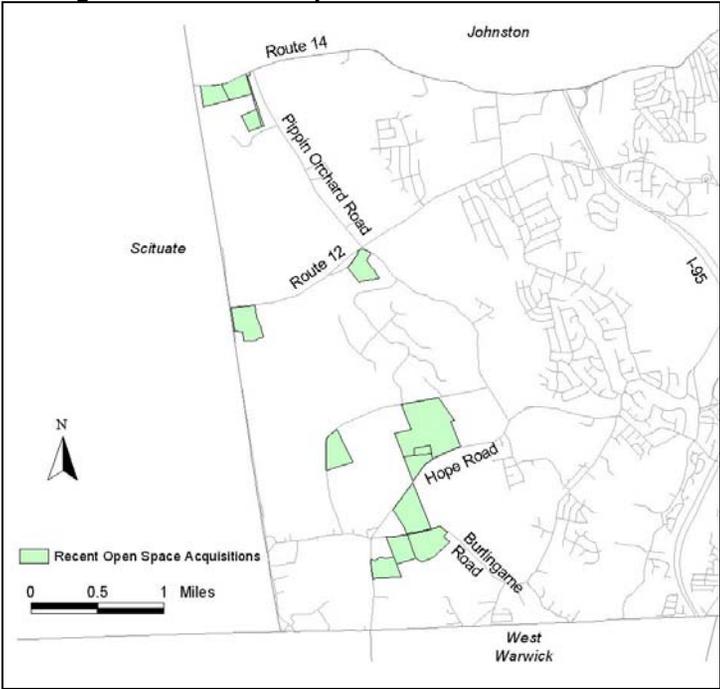
Through 2005, the City of Cranston has acquired 16 parcels of land that total over 350 acres (see Figure 5-1). Almost all of them are located in western Cranston and most of them are near Burlingame Road, Hope Road, and Pippin Orchard Road.

Most of these sites were purchased directly by the City of Cranston with the funding from state agencies and local partnerships. Besides the City, non-profit groups such as the West Bay Land Trust and the Southside Community Land Trust will manage some parcels. The

City intends to retain their current uses, which are mostly farms and forests. Although not all of these parcels are contiguous, they add to the existing pattern and the diversity of protected and natural

resources in western Cranston. They contain natural drainage ways as well as farmlands. These parcels will contribute to the overall quality of life as they become available for use by the residents and other visitors.

Figure 5-1. Land Acquisitions since the 1992 Plan



Land Acquisition Opportunities

The use of the City's open space parcels varies and is primarily based on the original purpose of acquisition. Future uses may change at some locations depending on funds, recreational needs, population growth, additional acquisitions, and future development in western Cranston. As these needs change, the City should accommodate growth and identify specific uses for sites as appropriate.

As identified in the Land Use and Housing elements, most of the development through 2005 has occurred in western Cranston. This increase has presumably generated needs for specific active-use areas. Future open space acquisitions could serve certain functions for recreation as the population of western Cranston increases. However, the City will have to be mindful of the funding source requirements that can restrict the use of these acquired properties.

Preservation of Agricultural Land

Land that is used for agricultural purposes contributes substantially to the overall quality of life for the residents of Cranston, protects natural resources, and prevents land development. Several local and state programs and partnerships support the preservation of agricultural land.

Cranston Historic Scenic Farm Loop

The City of Cranston established the Historic Scenic Farm Loop in 2002, along rural roads in western Cranston to identify certain farms and scenic areas. This loop, which is shown on a map and described in the Open Space element:

- Improves awareness and allows people to enjoy the remaining farmland;
- Promotes the economic vitality of the farms by attracting visitors and;
- Preserves scenic qualities of the land and farms.

Rhode Island Farm Ways

The Rhode Island Farm Ways program, which began in 2004, is administered by RI Department of Environmental Management (DEM). The purpose of this statewide program is to work with

farmers to increase 'agri-tourism' or 'agri-tainment' on their farms, provide professional development and training, and help market their products and services. This type of program supports the continuation of farms as businesses as well as helps protect the rural and agriculture uses and character so prevalent in western Cranston.

West Bay Land Trust

The West Bay Land Trust (WBLT) has been involved with preservation management of land in Cranston. For example, the WBLT manages the 250-acre Knight Farm that was recently purchased by the City with assistance from the Champlin Foundation and the RIDEM. It also was responsible for establishing the Historic Scenic Farm Loop along with support from the Cranston City Council and Planning Department.

Pawtuxet River Authority

The Pawtuxet River Authority (PRA) focuses on a variety of ways to protect and improve both the natural and recreational benefits of the Pawtuxet River and its tributaries. Under authority of the State, the PRA manages several parcels of land along the Pawtuxet River, organizes recreational activities, educates people about the River's importance, and promotes its benefits.

The PRA's most recent land acquisition included a 48-acre parcel located along the River in the Howard Industrial Park. This type of land stewardship protects natural resources and open space for the citizens of Cranston as well as other people that live, work, and utilize the River.

Environmental and Resource Regulation

Wastewater Management in Western Cranston

The issue of wastewater management in Western Cranston was detailed in the 1992 Plan. The focus was to improve the design and management of the individual septic disposal systems (ISDS) due to the "severe" or poor quality of the soils and steep slopes in this part of the City. The physical (soil) characteristics have not changed since that time, and recent development is mainly residential. However, changes in the management of wastewater have included: improved RIDEM regulations (now known as Onsite Wastewater

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Treatment Systems (OWTS)); system inspections; and technical assistance.

Potential Extension of Sewer Service in Western Cranston

An 11-mile, pressurized sewer return line (RISE Line) runs between the power plant at the Johnston Resource Recovery Station and the Cranston Sewage Treatment Plant, and passes through western Cranston. Additional information on the line and other utility infrastructure such as the water line in Pippin Orchard Road is included in the Services and Facilities Element.

There is potential to connect sewer lines to this main line since the City recently signed an agreement with owners of the line that allows the City to tap into it. Connections will be more expensive due to the high cost of connecting to a pressurized system. Development pressure in western Cranston has resulted in both existing and new homes and businesses to request connections to this line. The City must develop a mechanism or policy which regulates the allocation of the limited RISE Line capacity.

Increased development will affect the area's natural resources through the need for advanced treatment septic disposal systems in the poorer soils, increased stormwater runoff, encroachment into protected areas, and the loss of natural habitats and open spaces. The option for connections to the RISE Return line should be tied to additional requirements to better preserve and protect the resource areas. This could include such actions as larger setbacks from streams and their bordering wetlands.

Conservation Commission

The Cranston Conservation Commission is charged to promote, protect, and develop the City's ecological resources in order to maintain and preserve its natural environment. The Commission also advises the City Planning Department and makes recommendations to the Mayor and the City Council. The Commission continues to support several conservation and preservation programs including:

- Open space acquisition and the Historic Scenic Farm Loop,
- Coordination with other City groups regarding open space,
- The use of small, urbanized areas of open space, and

- Tree beautification, planting and nurseries.

These and other efforts help maintain and improve the diversity of the environment in Cranston and ensure that these resources are protected through appropriate measures.



Stillhouse Cove



Part III - Strategies and Actions

This section identifies actions for this element through a series of programs and strategies that will help resolve existing and future issues. A summary of the proposed actions, time frames, and responsibilities for the Natural Resources element is at the end of this section (see Table 5-3).

Protection of Cranston's Natural Resources

Adopt a 'Farm-Based Retail District'

The adoption of a farm based retail district will improve the potential to preserve agricultural land. Where much of western Cranston remains as farmland, special zoning regulations will promote the protection of the farms and retain the area's natural, cultural, and historic assets. The zoning district will encourage the continuation of agricultural activities especially when used with other programs for promoting the economic vitality of farms.

A farm-based retail district, similar to one recently adopted in South Kingstown, Rhode Island, would support the continuation of existing farms and encourage the development of new ones by allowing retail operations to expand, thereby increasing the customer base. This ordinance would allow farmers to be more competitive, maintain productive farmland, retain the rural character of the area, support historic preservation goals, and most importantly, preserve the natural resources within the district. The ordinance would also support other programs that promote preservation of open space and 'agri-tourism' / 'agri-tainment', such as Rhode Island Farm Ways, Rhode Island Center for Agricultural Promotion and Education (RICAPE), RIDEM and Rhody Fresh.

Adopt a 'Green' Building Program

Many communities are beginning to realize the benefits of adopting a "green" building program. The City of Cranston has the opportunity to reduce impacts to the environment, improve building efficiency, and lowering utility bills by encouraging the construction of green buildings.

New advances in building science, technology, and operations are available to designers, builders, and owners who want to "build green" and maximize environmental and economic performance as well as improve the health of people in the building. Environmental benefits include:

- Enhance and protect ecosystems and biodiversity,
- Improve air and water quality,
- Reduce solid waste,
- Conserve natural resources.

Economic benefits include:

- Reduce operating costs,
- Improve employee productivity and satisfaction.

Health and community benefits:

- Improve air, thermal, and acoustic environments,
- Enhance occupant comfort and health,
- Minimize strain on local infrastructure,
- Contribute to overall quality of life.

These improvements would be directed by a set of "green building" principles to encourage owners, architects, developers, and contractors to incorporate meaningful sustainable building goals early in the design process for all facilities.

Offer 'Brownfield' Assistance for Industrial Redevelopment

Brownfields are properties made more expensive and complicated to develop because of the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant. Brownfield sites may include any residential, industrial, or commercial property.

State and federal money is available to support redevelopment of brownfields in Cranston. The City, private businesses, and non-profits can use such funds to analyze the legal, regulatory, and

financial barriers to clean and reuse contaminated sites, conduct planning studies, and undertake community involvement processes. Intense local and regional interest in brownfields for environmental cleanup and urban redevelopment has led to a competitive demand for brownfield funding. State and federal sources include:

- Revolving Loans - EDA, CDBG (HUD)
- Assessment Grants - HUD, EPA, DOT
- Tax Incentives – Low-income housing, mill building, and historic rehabilitation tax credits.

These funds can be used to assess and remediate sites, and to support redevelopment of existing and new uses.

Adopt a Transfer of Development Rights Program (TDR)

The City of Cranston should adopt a transfer of development rights (TDR) ordinance as one tool to help manage growth throughout the City. Hundreds of counties and municipalities across the nation have passed legislation to use TDR programs for this purpose. TDR programs have been used successfully in other jurisdictions to protect thousands of acres of agricultural, historically, or ecologically sensitive land for the purpose of stimulating economic growth and managing urban development.

Under a TDR program, development rights are transferred from "sending areas," which are designated for protection, to "receiving areas," which are designated for growth. Conservation easements permanently protect land in the sending areas from which the development rights have been sold.

The intent of a TDR program is to:

- Protect significant resources with a minimum investment of government funds.
- Encourage development in those areas where infrastructure can support increased development.
- Create a market whereby landowners with property in a sending area may sell their development rights to a developer in a receiving area.
- Compensate landowners for the restrictions placed on their potential development options.

There are several key characteristics of TDR that can help manage land in Cranston:

- Landowners may choose to sell the development rights to their land.
- Development rights in a TDR program are not forfeited but are transferred to another property.
- The sale of development rights is a private transaction between a landowner and a developer, public funds are not involved.
- A TDR program relies on zoning to function.

Manage Land Development Along the Scenic Farm Loop

The City of Cranston should adopt regulations focused on maintaining the land use character and quality along the Scenic Farm Loop. These regulations could include mandatory cluster subdivision regulations to site houses away from scenic view sheds, discouragement of frontage lots with very large frontage requirements, limitations on driveway cuts for safety as well as scenic qualities.

Encourage Cluster Subdivisions

Cluster subdivision designs preserve the landscape character and natural resources of land. However, encouraging cluster subdivisions may require the offer of density bonuses, where more units than allowed by zoning are placed in a certain area of the parcel but important natural resources and views are preserved. The use of a sliding scale of bonus units could be used to obtain more significant protections of views and resources.

Surface Water Quality

Establish Watershed Management Plans

The Pawtuxet River and the Providence and Seekonk Rivers' watersheds in Cranston need to be protected according to RIDEM standards that address EPA National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES Phase II) requirements. The Pawtuxet River Authority is designated as the Watershed Council for the Pawtuxet River watershed, which includes more than 95 percent of Cranston. RIDEM issues stormwater permits under the NPDES program and the City should work to ensure compliance with these regulations.

The City is preparing Phase II Stormwater Management Plans, with the assistance of the Pawtuxet River Authority to establish watershed management plans according to RIDEM standards as required by NPDES Phase II requirements. The City should also seek non-point source mitigation funds from the State to assist with meeting NPDES II requirements.

Adopt Low Impact Development Techniques

Watershed protection can be improved through the adoption of standards, such as low impact development techniques. These techniques maintain and enhance the pre-development hydrologic regime of urban and developing watersheds to better manage stormwater from new construction. Said techniques can be applied in areas that range from a whole watershed to a small parking lot. For example, Stormwater Best Management Practices (SBMPs) can be required for the whole watershed or applied to a single development. The City should require BMP's to manage stormwater for all new construction to preserve and protect the watershed.

Create River Restoration Plans

The Pocasset and Pawtuxet Rivers offer scenic views for those that visit, hike, and boat along these rivers. However, some areas have been degraded through development and need additional protection to enhance their scenic qualities. The City should create restoration plans for the banks of these rivers where roadways and developments have degraded them. A restoration plan should include a comprehensive approach including:

- Thinking in terms of a total watershed plan;
- Balancing the river's diversity;
- Maintaining appropriate uses for appropriate places;
- Encouraging direct contact with the river;
- Emphasizing restoration not development;
- Stimulating widespread participation and partnerships.

Public participation is critical since it is needed to implement and sustain any restoration plan. A plan could include support from the non-profits such as the Pawtuxet River Authority, educational, and awareness programs. This may encourage users to help clean the riverbanks and report potential developments that negatively affect these rivers.

Natural Resource Action Program

Table 5-3. Summary of the Actions and Responsibilities for this Plan

	Action	Responsibility
Protection of Cranston’s Natural and Environmental Resources		
NR-1	Use local zoning and land use regulations to assess and mitigate development impacts on rare and endangered species: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and prioritize critical habitat areas in western Cranston • Locate habitats of rare and endangered species. 	City Council Conservation Commission Planning Commission Planning Department RIDEM
NR-2	Adopt watershed management plans: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare plans in accordance to RIDEM standards to address potential pollution in compliance with NPDES Phase II requirements • Seek non-point source pollution mitigation funds from the state to assist in preparation. <i>Related Action: SF-5</i>	City Council Public Works Department Planning Commission Planning Department
NR-3	Promote a ‘green’ building program for all new construction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider a LEED-type program to analyze energy efficiency and sustainability. <i>Related Action: SF-6</i>	City Council Building and Zoning Department Plan Commission Planning Department Public Works Department
NR-4	Ensure that the State and Federal “brownfield” programs are identified as potential resources for redevelopment of industrial sites. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to work with state and federal agencies to complete the remediation activities at contaminated sites such as the former Ciba-Geigy plant. • Expand THE LIST OF SITES 	City Council Economic Development Dept. Planning Commission Planning Department Public Works Department Conservation Commission RIDEM EPA
NR-5	Adopt a Transfer of Development Rights ordinance: Use development regulations to better manage development throughout the City <i>Related Action: LU-6</i>	City Council Planning Commission Planning Department West Bay Land Trust
NR-6	Adopt a ‘farm-based retail’ district: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pattern regulation similar to the South County, Rhode Island proposal (Farm and Forestry Strategies Report). 	City Council Planning Commission Planning Department
NR-7	Develop a comprehensive septic system management program. <i>Related Action: SF-12</i>	City Council Public Works Department

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NR-8	<p>Continue to implement the open space preservation strategy for Western Cranston:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify high value agricultural sites and open space areas to be permanently preserved. Identify and implement strategies to protect the aforementioned property. <p><i>Related Action:</i> LU-10</p>	<p>City Council Planning Commission Planning Department Conservation Commission</p>
NR-9	<p>Amend the cluster development regulations to reflect conservation design standards (i.e. conservation subdivisions)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use program in order to facilitate the preservation of significant areas of open space and environmentally sensitive areas. Require Conservation Subdivisions as the preferred form of land development. <p><i>Related Action:</i> LU-1</p>	<p>City Council Planning Commission Planning Department</p>
NR-10	<p>Require all subdivisions that propose on-site wells to include an analysis of groundwater:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set standards suitable to verify conformance with RIDEM's Rules and Regulations relating to Drinking Water Wells. 	<p>Planning Commission Planning Department Public Works Department</p>
Surface Water Quality		
NR-11	<p>Adopt programs for improvement of the City's lakes and ponds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Base the programs on the water quality data collected since the last Comprehensive Plan. Continue to support, and where possible further develop, the volunteer pond watching program for sampling of water quality. 	<p>Public Works Department Conservation Commission RIDEM University of Rhode Island</p>
NR-12	<p>Develop management programs for specific water bodies in order to improve water quality and foster increased recreational use.</p> <p><i>Related Action:</i> SF-5</p>	<p>City Council Planning Commission Planning Department Public Works Department Conservation Commission</p>
NR-13	<p>Implement the watershed protection strategies recommended in the State's Scituate Reservoir Management Plan in order to ensure the future quality of this water supply.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prohibit underground storage tanks Increase minimum residential lot size to 120,000 sq ft per lot Revise subdivision regulations to require specific erosion and stormwater controls for new road construction and improve water quality in the runoff <p>Exclude the watershed area from future extension of utility services, except to service existing well contamination problems and septic system failures, after exhausting all other remedies.</p>	<p>City Council Planning Commission Planning Department Public Works Department</p>
NR-14	<p>Implement Best Management Practices (BMP's) for pesticides and fertilizers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with local farms to implement the practices Work with local businesses to manage bulk storage and movement of the materials 	<p>University of Rhode Island Cooperative Extension Service Conservation Commission RIDEM</p>
NR-15	<p>Implement Best Management Practices (BMP's) for stormwater and erosion controls:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include requirements for all new subdivision and development projects. Implement the recommendations of the Fuss & O'Neill stormwater management study. 	<p>University of Rhode Island Cooperative Extension Service Planning Commission Planning Department Conservation Commission RIDEM</p>

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NR-16	Adopt an Underground Storage tank ordinance.	City Council Public Works Department Conservation Commission
NR-17	Ensure that municipal salt storage piles are adequately covered.	City Council Public Works Department
NR-18	Establish Watershed Management Plans, where necessary in cooperation with adjacent communities.	City Council Plan Commission Planning Department Conservation Commission Pawtuxet River Authority RIDEM EPA
NR-19	Adopt standards, such as Low Impact Development techniques, to better manage stormwater from roadways in new construction. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce impervious surfaces in new developments such as with porous pavements and reduced travel lane widths to reduce runoff. <i>Related Action:</i> LU-2	Planning Commission Planning Department Conservation Commission Department of Public Works RIDEM
NR-20	Create restoration plans for the banks of the Pocasset and Pawtuxet rivers where roadways and development have degraded the rivers	Pawtuxet River Authority Planning Commission Planning Department Conservation Commission Public Works Department
NR-21	Adopt a nutrient loading ordinance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce pollutant loading to the rivers, streams and water bodies. <i>Related Action:</i> SF-5	Pawtuxet River Authority City Council Planning Commission Conservation Commission Planning Department



Introduction to the Historic Preservation Element

The Historic Preservation Element promotes strategies and actions that will help ensure the qualities that define Cranston as a special place are safeguarded as a legacy for future generations. Historic structures, districts, cemeteries and landscapes are important aspects of what makes Cranston unique. Historic resources not only provide a physical link to the past, but they also help shape the City's identity.

Key Challenges

Although several actions from the 1992 Plan have been implemented to protect Cranston's historic resources, important resources are still being lost or degraded as development occurs outside of locally designated districts.

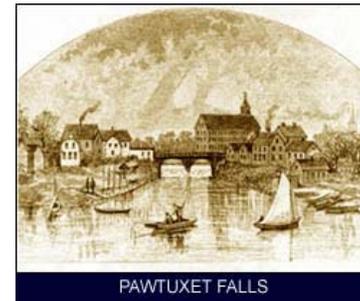
This element will address the following issues:

- Whether critical historic resources (including individual buildings, districts, historic cemeteries, and landscapes) are sufficiently protected against impacts that would degrade their historic and cultural value to the City;
- Historic preservation techniques and policies that should be actively applied and adopted to ensure that properties are not lost to development and the effects of neglect, weather and age;
- The importance of educating the public about Cranston's historic resources and how to preserve these resources.

Key Strategies

A useful technique that can protect the historic architecture and landscape areas is a Local Historic District. Five local Historic Districts have been designated in Cranston: Oak Lawn Village, Lippitt Hill School, Joy Homestead, the Turgeon House, and the Westcott House. However, several other areas need additional protection through this designation, such as Pawtuxet Village, Edgewood, Norwood Avenue, the Fenner House, and Sprague Mansion.

Another key issue that must be understood when considering historic preservation is that the definition of historic resources not only incorporates specific buildings and structures, but also districts, cemeteries, and landscapes. This plan recommends preservation of landscape in the western portion of the City to coincide with the efforts to preserve the vestiges of agriculture that still exists there.





Part I. Summary and Accomplishments of the 1992 Plan

Introduction

The Historic Preservation element of the 1992 Comprehensive Plan focused on improving education about and awareness of historic resources. This section summarizes the issues and accomplishments of the 1992 Plan and makes recommendations to support and encourage the preservation of the City's historic resources. Historic Preservation element of 1992 Comprehensive Plan focused on four themes:

- Traditional Preservation Techniques,
- Threats to Specific Historic Resources,
- Integration with the Comprehensive Plan,
- Education and Citizen Awareness.

Traditional Preservation Techniques

Survey and Inventory

The 1992 Plan recommended that survey and inventory are the standard techniques that the City should continue to use in order to assess, update, and expand the list of protected properties. Incomplete inventories that should be updated included comprehensive building inventories, prehistoric and historic archaeological sites, historic sites in western Cranston, and historic cemeteries. Of particular focus was the survey and sensitivity assessment of historic archaeological sites since they are difficult to detect.

National and State Registers

The Plan provided a map and list of existing State and National Register properties as well as properties recommended for this list. It recommended that the City should continue to evaluate and nominate eligible properties with a focus on historic districts.

Local Historic Districts

Local Historic Districts were purported to be the most powerful tool for a community to preserve the character of its historic areas. Efforts by the HDC, the City Plan Commission, and the citizen groups met strong opposition to establishing a Local Historic District for Pawtuxet Village. The Plan recommended that all involved agencies and citizens join forces to preserve and protect the City's historic heritage and that the HDC continue to formulate design review guidelines that are tailored to the local conditions in Cranston.

Other Preservation Tools

The Plan identified several preservation procedures to successfully protect historic resources in Cranston, all of which required a dynamic and aggressive educational program. These techniques included: a demolition delay ordinance, rehabilitation guidelines, economic incentive programs such as the federal and state tax credits, archaeological review, and adequate staffing and financial support of the Cranston HDC.

Threats to Specific Historic Resources

The 1992 Plan identified several historic properties that need to be preserved with a concerted effort. These properties included the Sockanosset Boys School, Howard Reservation, Narragansett Brewery, and Trolley Barn (since the 1992 Plan, all but four buildings at the Sockanosset Boys School, the Brewery and Trolley Barn have been demolished). A committee, such as the one used to preserve the Rhodes on the Pawtuxet dance hall, would have examined reuse possibilities, developed guidelines for rehabilitation, and identified constituencies for supporting preservation.

Integration with other Comprehensive Plan Elements

Integration of the Historic Preservation element with the other 1992 Plan elements was recommended. The Plan suggested that these elements coordinate, minimize impacts, and support historic preservation programs and policies.

Open Space, Recreation, and Natural Resources

The Plan recommended that land and development rights acquisition, easements, and other open space protection and natural resources programs are coordinated with the historic and archaeological resources whenever possible.

Housing

The patterns of development of Cranston’s neighborhoods in the most eastern part of the City were first established with streetcar connections to Providence and then with automobiles to the residential suburbs. In order to preserve the City’s historic housing stock, its building character and fabric, the City should work with a variety of city agencies and preservation groups to educate the public about historic preservation techniques and guidelines, create economic incentives to preserve historic properties, and coordinate programs with housing agencies.

Economic Development

The 1992 Plan recommended that the existing and proposed land development ordinances be reviewed to address impacts to historic properties. Isolated historic properties in commercial areas should be protected through appropriate site plan and design guidelines that encourage historic preservation techniques. Proposed industrial uses in both rural and urban areas should also be assessed.

Land Use Plan

The zoning and land use decisions including use regulations and site planning and review procedures should be integrated with the character and location of Cranston’s historic resources and areas to minimize disruption of visual qualities and community character.

Education and Citizen Awareness

The 1992 Plan suggested that Cranston citizens should be made aware of their historic resources, especially since many properties and

buildings do not fit into the traditional historic areas. The Plan recommended that a committee be established to expand educational programs and coordinate them with the Planning Commission.

Changes to the Plan since 1992

The Cranston City Council approved the following changes to the Historic Preservation element of the 1992 Comprehensive Plan.

- Noted that the “Cranston, Rhode Island, Statewide Historical Preservation Report, P-C-1, 1981” should be considered and used as part of the Comprehensive Plan.

1992 Plan Actions and Accomplishments

Table 5A-1 summarizes the Historic Preservation Actions from the 1992 Comprehensive Plan and identifies those that have been accomplished.

Table 5A-1. Accomplishments of the 1992 Comprehensive Plan

Action	1992 Actions	Accomplishments and Changes
Survey, Inventory and Traditional Preservation Techniques		
HP-1	Update and expand the survey of the historic properties on a citywide basis.	This action was not accomplished.
HP-2	Work with private property owners to encourage preservation of known archeological and historic sites on their land.	The Cranston HDC accomplished this in the Oak Lawn Historic District. In non-Local Historic Districts and non-historic areas, a few sites were preserved including portions of the Sockanosset Boys Training School.
HP-3	Nominate eligible individual properties and districts to the National Register of Historic Places and the State Register.	The Norwood Avenue and the former Taft Estate / Edgewood Historic District was nominated and designated on the Federal and State Historic Registers.
HP-4	Continue to establish local historic zoning overlay districts for areas and begin designation of individual structures.	The Pawtuxet Village Historic District was proposed in 1993 but not designated. Three other individual districts have been added: Joy Homestead, the Turgeon House and the Westcott House.
HP-5	Identify and implement appropriate economic incentive programs to encourage historic preservation and rehabilitation.	A local tax credit ordinance was drafted in 1993, but it was not passed by the City Council.
HP-6	Create a system for archeological review of development projects.	This action was implemented by using the State database. The Plan Commission requires Phase I analysis for all projects in identified 20-acre cells where roadway or other facilities will be dedicated to the public.
HP-7	Expand the role of the Historic District Commission, as the primary historic preservation body in Cranston.	The HDC has expanded its role by reviewing and approving several projects that had potential impacts to historic properties including Pawtuxet Traffic Calming and Sockanosset Crossing (Chapel View).
HP-8	Develop mechanisms for coordination of the activities of the Historic District Commission with other City boards and agencies through the City Planning Commission.	New subdivision regulations that require all master plans to be reviewed by several agencies were approved in 1996. The Plan Commission has the option to send proposals with historic resources to the HDC for review.
HP-9	Initiate study committee(s) for identified threatened historic properties.	This action was not accomplished.
Historic Preservation Planning and Development Policies		
HP-10	Enact a demolition ordinance imposing a waiting period before demolition of historic buildings, in order to provide an opportunity to consider alternatives to demolition.	This action was not accomplished.
HP-11	Adopt design review and procedural guidelines to implement historic district zoning in designated areas.	Design review and procedural guidelines were adopted.
HP-12	Incorporate historic preservation concerns into actions and policies adopted pursuant to other elements of the Comprehensive Plan.	This action was completed.
Education and Citizen Awareness		
HP-13	Develop and implement an expanded public education and awareness program.	An informational program flyer was created for select 3rd and 4th grades in the City school system.



Part II. Current Conditions and Issues

Introduction

As identified in the previous Plan, “Cranston is rich in historic, cultural resources worthy of protection.” The City, however, still needs to protect its historic resources by adding structures to the local list of historic properties, protecting existing structures, and adding new historic districts. Since the 1992 Plan was adopted, the Norwood Avenue Historic District and the Edgewood Historic District were added to the State and National Registers, and there were no additions to the local historic register. The following section identifies the existing historic assets and the current historic preservations issues.

Historic Preservation Authorities

National Register

The National Register of Historic Places is the federal government's official list of properties that are significant in American history and worthy of preservation. Properties listed in the National Register include individual buildings, historic districts, and archaeological sites. Rhode Island properties listed in the National Register include colonial houses, farms, Victorian neighborhoods, factory villages, diners, monuments, military bases, seacoast villages, suburban neighborhoods, and more. Rhode Island also has its own State Register of Historic Places. The criteria for inclusion in the State Register are the same as those for the National Register.

State Historic Preservation and Heritage Commission

The Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission is the state agency for historical preservation and heritage programs. The Commission operates a statewide historical preservation program

that identifies and protects historic buildings, districts, structures, and archaeological sites.

Cranston Historic District Commission

The Cranston Historic District Commission (HDC) reviews changes to properties located in a locally zoned historic district. When there is a proposed alteration to a property within a historic district, the HDC will review the proposed scope of work for conformance with their rehabilitation standards. The Commission uses its written procedures and standards to help a property owner in preparing for the review. The other work of the HDC includes submitting proposals to create additional local historic districts, making its collective experience available for local preservation efforts, and providing opinions on State and National Register nominations.

Local Historic District

A Local Historic District is a special zoning area created by a community, such as Cranston, to help save historic buildings and to preserve the special sense of time and place that exists in some parts of a community. The City monitors and guides construction activity in its historic areas through the HDC. The City Council enacts ordinances which identify areas for designation as a historic district. In a Local Historic District, all exterior alterations and new construction must be reviewed and approved by the HDC. This review ensures that the historic character of the buildings is maintained when changes are made.

The following is a list of historic assets on the National Register. The dates reflect when the site was added to the Register. The Local Historic Districts are identified in **bold**.

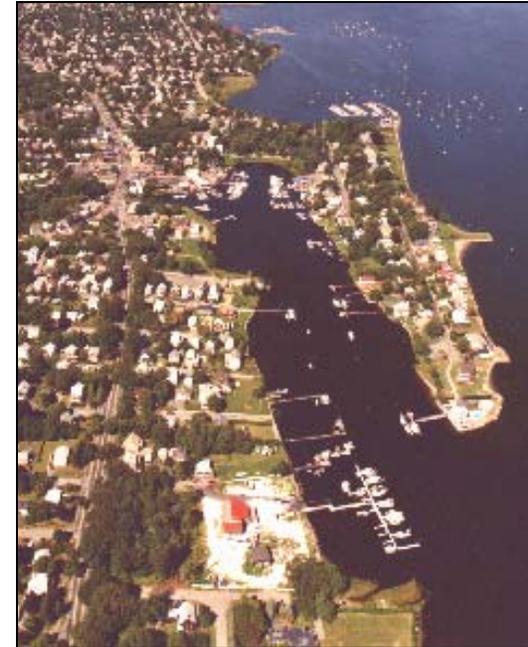
Table 5A-2. Historic Assets on the National Register, March 2004

Name	Location	Date
Arad Wood House	407 Pontiac Avenue	8/3/88
Arkwright Bridge	Hill Street	12/12/78
Taft Estate Historic District	Broad Street, Windsor Road, Circuit Drive, Narragansett Bay	10/24/03
Edgewood Yacht Club	3 Shaw Avenue	2/23/89
Furnace Hill Brook Historic and Archaeological District	Phenix Avenue and Hope Road	8/6/80
Governor Sprague Mansion /William Sprague House	1351 Cranston Street	2/18/71
Joy Homestead /Job Joy House	156 Scituate Avenue	12/12/78
Knightsville Meeting House /Knightsville-Franklin Congregational Church	67 Phenix Avenue	3/8/78
Lippitt Hill Historic District Lippitt Hill Historic School District	Burlingame and Hope Roads and Lippitt Avenue Hope Road	3/2/89
Nathan Westcott House	150 Scituate Avenue	1/5/89
Niles Westcott House/Westcote	101 Mountain Laurel Drive	8/3/88
Norwood Avenue Historic District	Norwood Avenue	4/26/02
Oak Lawn Village Historic District	Wilbur Avenue from Natick Road to Oaklawn Avenue	11/25/77
Pawtuxet Village Historic District	near Pawtuxet Cove	4/24/73
Potter Remington House	571 Natick Avenue	12/12/78
Rhodes-on-the-Pawtuxet Ballroom and Gazebo	Rhodes Place	12/12/78
Sheldon House	458 Scituate Avenue	1/5/89
Thomas Fenner House	43 Stony Acre Drive	3/2/90

Source: Rhode Island Historic Preservation and Heritage Commission (www.preservationri.gov), June 2004.

Survey, Inventory, and Traditional Preservation Techniques

Several areas and buildings in Cranston have been targeted for historic preservation over the past ten years with limited success. Some of the key areas include the historic Pawtuxet Village District and the historic Norwood Avenue District.



Pawtuxet Cove

Although the Cranston Historic District Commission supports the preservation of these and other areas, the City needs to increase its effort and support to help ensure that preservation actions are successful. Preservation actions should focus on specific properties and districts (see Table 5A-3). Although general policies that are broader in scope may embrace all potential properties, they do not set the stage for critical paths and direction that will involve agencies, residents, city staff, and elected officials needed to follow, support and implement specific actions.

Table 5A-3. Properties Recommend for Local Historic Districts

The Pawtuxet Village Historic District
The Taft Estates Historic District
The Norwood Avenue Historic District
Rolfe Street Commercial District
Cranston Print Works

The Pawtuxet Village Historic District

Pawtuxet Village was initially settled in the mid 1600's around the water falls and cove where the Pawtuxet River empties into Narragansett Bay. Due to the availability of waterpower and access to the Bay, Pawtuxet Village experienced different periods of industrial, residential, and recreational development. The different layers of Pawtuxet Village's historic character were eventually recognized with its designation to the National Register of Historic Places in 1973. The Warwick side of the village received even further recognition and protection when it was designated as a Local Historic District in 1989. After three attempts by the Cranston HDC to pass an ordinance designating the Village as a Local Historic District, it still remains unprotected.

The Edgewood Historic District – Taft Estate Plan

The Edgewood Historic District – Taft Estate Plan, located on the eastern section of Cranston along Narragansett Bay, was placed on the National Register of Historic places in 2003. This 14-acre suburban neighborhood contains a mixture of period homes that were constructed between 1850 and 1941. It is a relatively rare example of a streetcar and early-auto/garden suburb.

Although it is on the National Register, owners of these private properties are free to manage, maintain, or dispose of their property. In order to ensure that the historic character of this District is retained, in particular, the numerous examples of Late Victorian domestic architecture; it should be nominated and registered as a Local Historic District.

Historic Preservation Planning and Education

One of the key goals of historic preservation in historic districts is to ensure that new buildings and designs are in keeping with the existing historic pattern and character of the area. This issue continually occurs in historic districts and with historic buildings as the following examples illustrate:

- A new building is proposed that is set back from the street in an area that has buildings with no setbacks.

- Proposed homes are built out to the maximum lot coverage in a neighborhood that is less dense than the proposed development.

Although these types of buildings may meet local zoning requirements and technically fit the lot envelope, the historic guidelines and standards generally do not allow them to be built. When built, these types of buildings distract from the historic fabric of the district and from the intended preservation of a historic building. The City should ensure that the Historic District Commission has a stronger role in the review of proposed buildings. An educated and informed public will also support preservation efforts.

Specific areas as identified in the previous section should also be targeted for educating the public. This will help focus efforts and ensure that all interested residents understand the benefits of historic preservation. Education of the neighborhood around Pawtuxet Village, in particular, should be prioritized and supported to ensure that this area becomes a local district.



Part III - Strategies and Actions

This section identifies historic preservation actions that can benefit the property owners, businesses, and the residents of Cranston. It also explains each of the actions that are necessary to support historic preservation and help resolve issues identified in the previous section.

Although several of the historic preservation actions identified in the 1992 Plan were accomplished, historic preservation techniques and policies should be actively pursued to ensure that properties are not lost to development and age, and that the community can benefit from the preservation of its historic resources. Pawtuxet Village is slowly losing its architectural character due to the lack of standards and guidelines for the exteriors of buildings that could be applied if it were designated as a Local Historic District. The following action items address the protection of these and other historic assets. A summary of the proposed actions, time frames, and responsibilities is at the end of this section.

Traditional Preservation Techniques

Pawtuxet Village Historic District

Pawtuxet Village was initially settled in the mid 1600's around the falls and cove where the Pawtuxet River spills into Narragansett Bay. While this area was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1973, and the Warwick side of the village has been designated as a local historic district, the Pawtuxet Village as a whole remains unprotected and at risk of losing its unique historic character. Several fine examples of buildings that reflect this area's distinctive maritime character remain in the Village. In order to ensure that the several examples of 18th, 19th and 20th century architecture remain in this district, it should be designated and adopted as a Local Historic District.

Edgewood / Taft Estate Historic District

The Edgewood neighborhood is located on the eastern section of Cranston along Narragansett Bay and contains a mixture of period homes that were constructed between 1850 and 1941. Although this area is on the National Register, owners of private properties in this district are free to manage, maintain, or dispose of their property with limited protection of the historic resources. In order to ensure that construction activity does not erode the historic character of the Edgewood / Taft Estate Historic District, it should be designated and adopted as a Local Historic District.

Norwood Avenue Historic District

The Norwood Avenue Historic District is located along Norwood Avenue between Roger Williams Park and Broad Street. This area is listed on the National Register and includes at least eight historically significant homes dating from between 1870 and 1930. By registering this district as a Local Historic District, the distinctive characteristics of this neighborhood will be protected for future generations to enjoy.

Update and Expand the Survey of Historic Properties

This action was identified in the 1992 Plan; however, it has not been accomplished to date. A periodic citywide survey of historic resources is critical to ensure the inventory of historic properties is continually updated in accordance with current community values. The citywide historic inventory update should also include a prehistoric and historic archeological assessment.

Encourage Private Preservation

While it is recognized that archeological sites are often not clearly visible, such as the site at Furnace Hill Brook, they should be protected through ongoing communication with property owners to ensure that the historic value of these sites is not compromised. The success of this action will be largely dependent on the education and awareness actions listed below.

Historic Preservation Planning and Development Policies

Create a Historic Resource Task Force

The historic resources of Cranston can play an important part of the City's tourism industry. A task force is needed to assess how the historic resources of the City can be further promoted to attract residents from within Cranston, adjacent towns and cities, as well as broader locations at the regional, national, and international scale. The role of the task force will include an assessment of the existing demands of the tourist markets and identify options to capitalize on these demands to promote the City's historic resources. Another important role of the task force will be to identify the measures needed to ensure that tourism does not adversely affect the historic resources. The task force should coordinate with the West Bay Land Trust and the City Plan Commission.

Education and Citizen Awareness

Educate Neighborhoods on Local Historic Districts

An education program is needed to increase awareness of the implications and ultimate benefits of Local Historic District designations. While a broad historic preservation education program will be useful to help the residents of Cranston appreciate the importance of historic preservation, a more targeted approach is needed to ensure that actions such as designating Local Historic Districts can be implemented effectively. The education program should focus on specific areas such as the Pawtuxet Village to help the residents of these areas become more aware of the historic value of their districts and how the historic resources are instrumental in creating a unique local identity for their neighborhoods.

Distribute Information and Guidance on Preservation.

An important aspect of historic preservation is helping residents, the City administration, and visitors become aware of which buildings and places in Cranston are historically significant, and more importantly, why they are significant. An education program should be implemented to help residents understand how its historic resources contribute towards a community's unique identity. Information and guidelines on historic preservation can be disseminated in various media to help people understand what actually affects the historic character of places and how Cranston's unique character can be protected. Existing resources such as the Secretary of Interiors Standards of Preservation of Historic Properties can be used for the education and awareness program.

Historic Preservation Action Program**Table 5A-4. Summary of the Proposed Actions and Responsibilities for this Plan**

	Action	Responsibility
Survey, Inventory and Traditional Preservation Techniques		
HP-1	Nominate eligible individual properties and districts to the National Register of Historic Places, and the State Register.	Planning Department Historic Commission
HP-2	Continue to establish local historic overlay districts for areas and begin designation of individual structures such as: Make Pawtuxet Village a Local Historic District. Make Edgewood / Taft Estate Historic District a Local Historic District. Make Norwood Avenue Historic District a Local Historic District. Make Rolfe Street Commercial District a Local Historic District	Planning Department Historic Commission City Council Planning Commission
HP-3	Continue to identify and implement appropriate economic incentive programs to encourage historic preservation and rehabilitation.	Planning Department Historic Commission City Council Planning Commission
HP-4	Continue to include archeological review of development projects according to the state database.	Planning Department Historic Commission Planning Commission
HP-5	Continue to update and expand the survey of the historic properties on a citywide basis.	Planning Department Historic Commission
HP-6	Continue to work with private property owners to encourage preservation of known archeological and historic sites on their land.	Planning Department Historic Commission
HP-7	Continue the role of the Historic Commission as the principle City agency for historic preservation.	Historic Commission City Council
Historic Preservation Planning and Development Policies		
HP-8	Create a task force to look at the options and demands of tourism focused on the historic resources of the City.	Planning Department Economic Development Department Historic Commission
HP-9	Establish study committee(s) for identified threatened historic properties to include representation from district and property when possible.	Historic Commission Planning Department City Council
HP-10	Enact a demolition ordinance imposing a waiting period before demolition of historic buildings in order to provide an opportunity to consider alternatives to demolition.	Planning Department Historic Commission City Council Planning Commission
HP-11	Continue to implement design review and procedural guidelines for historic district zoning in designated areas.	Planning Department Historic Commission

5A. HISTORIC PRESERVATION

HP -12	Survey accurate locations of historic cemeteries using GPS and submit the coordinate data to the City's IT department in order to map the cemeteries on GIS maps with plat and lot information.	Historic Cemetery Commission IT Department
Education and Citizen Awareness		
HP-13	The Historic Commission should target specific areas such as Pawtuxet Village to educate the neighborhood about the benefits of a Local Historic District designation.	Planning Department Historic Commission
HP-14	Assist residents and City administration to understand and appreciate the importance of preserving historic buildings and places.	Planning Department Historic Commission
HP-15	Distribute information and guidance on preservation, based on the Secretary of Interiors Standards of Preservation, for public and private use.	Planning Department Historic Commission



Introduction to the Services and Facilities Element

One of the major functions of local government is providing services to maintain road, utility and building infrastructure. However, this is also one of the most costly budget areas because of the high costs for construction, operation and maintenance, and personnel. Consequently, high quality and efficient service delivery is a key goal. The City must also program the expansion of infrastructure and services to support future land uses and development that meet community goals.

Overall, the City has provided adequate services to its older neighborhoods. However, expansion of services in Western Cranston continues to be a source of concern as the need to accommodate existing and anticipated growth will require additional services and facilities.

Key Challenges

Ongoing city-wide facilities issues include:

- Improving safety on roads and sidewalks;
- Upgrading the public sewage system and improving water quality;
- Controlling the extensions of public and sewer services for new development;
- Providing maintenance for and improving City buildings including schools, fire stations, library, police and City Hall ;

- Planning for new library and emergency response facilities; and,
- Improving energy efficiency and lowering the costs of operating public buildings.

The challenge is to find solution to these issues with cost effective and efficient strategies.

Key Strategies

This Comprehensive Plan identifies the following key strategies relating to services and facilities:

Control expansion of utilities

The expansion of the public and private utility systems should be restricted. Additional development can occur without major extensions of new utility lines. Therefore, new system connections should be assessed to better match these extensions with community goals;

Create Ongoing Capital Programs

Pavement maintenance, energy conservation and street signage are programs that should be continuously funded; and,

Administration and Management

A rigorous set of criteria for capital planning is needed to identify the priorities for capital improvement projects. Special utility and maintenance funds could be established as the means to earmark budgets for City facilities.



Part I. Summary and Accomplishments of the 1992 Plan

Introduction

This section of the Services and Facilities element summarizes the issues and accomplishments of the 1992 Comprehensive Plan.

At that time, the citywide focus was on the mandated upgrading of the sewage treatment plant. In Western Cranston, which was being developed, the focus was on extending sewer and water utilities and the pressures for additional growth if such services were extended.

Services

Sewer

In 1992, the City was evaluating upgrading sewage treatment and maintaining water quality in the Pawtuxet River, as mandated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). At that time, sewers serviced the developed portion of the City east of Interstate 295 (I-295) and a new industrial area near the Johnston line west of I-295 and north of Scituate Avenue. Since then, the sewage treatment plant has been upgraded and a discharge program has been implemented to maintain sufficient flow in the Pawtuxet River, reducing pollution concentrations. Sewer lines have not been constructed in western Cranston, except one completed through a special exchange agreement with the Florida Light & Power (RISE Return Line) in the town of Johnston.

In 1992, sewer service was already provided to 90% of the City's, existing population. As a result, the 1992 Plan recommended a stricter approach to prohibit sewer extension in Western Cranston (with the exception of a new village center) and if sewers were needed for health reasons, not to permit any increase in allowed density.

Water

In 1992, the public water lines in Western Cranston had not yet been taken over by the Providence Water Supply Board. Approximately two-thirds of the City land area was serviced with public water. The City had an ad hoc policy of allowing half-acre residential development when public water was extended to previously undeveloped areas, largely in Western Cranston. As a result of this policy, roadways and other public facilities were strained by increased development and valuable open space was lost. Just as with sewers, the extension of water lines was also a cause for allowing an increase in density for new developments. Limits on future service areas were recommended as a means to better manage expansion of the water system.

Low-density zoning was implemented to preserve groundwater in Western Cranston. Other policies recommended following the State's Scituate Reservoir Watershed Management Plan by revising regulations and by offering water conservation incentives, including graduated rates based on how much was used during on-peak and off-peak times.

Regional Utilities

Since 1992, the water and sewer utilities have been taken over by private and regional authorities (discussed below). The major regional utility issue at the time of the 1992 Plan was the proposed extension of the Scituate Reservoir Service Area to include the East Bay communities. The City opposed the proposed Cross Bay pipeline, which would have expanded the service area. This was because of EPA's requirement that the City discharge nine million gallons a day (MGD) of treated effluent flow to the Pawtuxet River. If the river flows were reduced for additional water supply, the City would be required to increase the level of treatment of the discharge. In addition, the City feared that the water supply from the Scituate Reservoir would be inadequate to service future growth in the City. However, the Cross

6. SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Bay pipeline project was constructed and new development continues within the City along with guarantees of minimum flows into the Pawtuxet River to improve water quality in that river.

Facilities

Western Cranston was a major focus of the 1992 Comprehensive Plan, not only for public utility services but also for other facilities to support the expanding population. A village center was proposed for Western Cranston and is more fully discussed in the Land Use Element. However, the Services and Facilities Element noted that Fire Protection and Library facilities were likely needed in Western Cranston, and that city-wide increases in school children expected to peak in 1995-96, would require reorganization or construction of new classrooms.

Other than schools, fire and libraries, the issues identified in the 1992 Plan included the need for increased record storage, and alternatives for solid waste disposal.

Schools

The City schools were experiencing growth that called either for restructuring class sizes, particularly in the elementary grades, or constructing a new school. The 1992 Plan recommended that if a new school were constructed, its location should reinforce the idea of a village center in western Cranston. A new elementary school, Orchard Farms, has been constructed next to the proposed village center at the intersection of Pippin Orchard Road and Scituate Avenue.

In addition, the 1992 Plan called for better maintenance of the existing schools to preserve the public's investment in these buildings. Either a new fund, or shifting responsibility to another City department, was recommended.

Fire

The concern for emergency response in western Cranston resulted in the recommendation to convert Station #5 from a volunteer to full-time manned station and to consider further changes in the City's fire companies and facilities. Since then, the volunteer stations have ceased operation and two of the four stations have been sold. The volunteer station on Hope Road is currently maintained as a museum.

Libraries

The 1992 Plan referenced a 1987 study that suggested a branch library was needed in western Cranston. The 1992 Plan noted that the facility could be funded with impact fee contributions and could support the village center concept. To date, a branch library has not been constructed in western Cranston although a site for its construction was acquired along Scituate Avenue in the 1990's.



Former Volunteer Fire Station on Hope Road
Now a Firefighter Museum

Changes to the Plan since 1992

The Cranston City Council approved and implemented the following changes to the Services and Facilities Element of the 1992 Comprehensive Plan:

- Decreased the restrictions on public water supply extension.
- Noted both the changes in regional water supply operations and the resulting changes in local impacts on permitted levels of wastewater discharge to the Pawtuxet River.
- Added a new subsection on "Emergency Operations" to address changes in the emergency services resulting from changes in facilities.

1992 Plan Actions and Accomplishments

Table 6-1 summarizes the Services and Facilities Actions from the 1992 Comprehensive Plan and identifies those that have been accomplished.

Table 6-1. Accomplishments of the 1992 Comprehensive Plan

Action	1992 Actions	Accomplishments and Changes
Sewage Collection, Treatment and Disposal		
SF-1	Proceed with design, funding and construction of the advanced sewage treatment facility immediately following a decision regarding the shared treatment facility options.	Completed. The City has a 30-year contract (1997-2027) with a private firm, <i>Veolia Water</i> , to maintain and operate the sewage treatment plant. The City owns the sewer lines.
SF-2	Negotiate with Providence Water Supply Board for an acceptable solution to the issue of adequate flows in the Pawtuxet River.	An agreement was reached.
SF-3	Establish a five-year annual sewage pumping station replacement program.	This is now the responsibility of Veolia Water.
SF-4	Design and Construct a sewage collection system to serve priority areas in western Cranston.	This was partially done through construction of FLPE (RISE Return Line) gas-fired generating plant in Johnston. Sewers can service the Pippin Orchard Road area only by permit from the City and only in certain locations because of the pipe size, topography, and line pressure constraints.
SF-5	Construct a limited sewer line to the area of the village center at the intersection of Pippin Orchard Road and Scituate Avenue. Sizing of the service should accommodate projections of flow from the proposed village at buildout.	A pressurized sewer return line was built running down Pippin Orchard Road and then over to the wastewater treatment plant (RISE Return Line).
Water Supply and Quality		
SF-6	Adopt water conservation measures for residential and industrial users to discourage waste and efficient use of the Scituate Reservoir water supply.	This action was not completed.
Safety Services		
SF-10	Evaluate the need for a new municipal fire station in the southwestern part of the City. Consider conversion of station #5 (Oaklawn Volunteer on Hope Road) to a full-time manned station.	This action was not completed.
Library Facilities		
SF-11	Identify alternative site for new Western Cranston branch library in conjunction with the proposal for a village community center.	This action was not completed.
Municipal Records Facilities		
SF-13	Identify existing facilities which could be utilized for records storage.	This action was not completed.
SF-14	Attempt to consolidate municipal offices and services in the vicinity of City Hall, and provide appropriate space for growth.	This action was not completed.



Part II. Current Conditions and Issues

Introduction

The key issues remaining from the 1992 Plan are protecting the water supply, the western-branch library, and fire facilities. Continuing issues that were not specified as goals in the 1992 Plan are facility maintenance funding and upkeep. New conditions have arisen from the fact that the water and sewer systems have been taken over by new entities. Providence Water Supply Board has assumed the water supply delivery in the western part of Cranston. *Veolia Water* is now managing the sewage treatment plant for the City. Other issues becoming more important to the City are better road maintenance and controlling illegal connections to the public sewers. In addition, recent performance reviews and audits by others have suggested different approaches to City management of schools and fire services.

Current Conditions

The following discussion summarizes current conditions for municipal services and facilities. It is important to note that although the water and significant portions of the sewer facilities are now being managed by other entities, the City's Department of Public Works (DPW) is still responsible for maintaining the City's infrastructure.

The mission of the DPW is to maintain and improve roadways, City buildings (except for schools), vehicle fleets, portions of the sanitary sewer network, stormwater drainage structures and other public assets through responsible fiscal measures and priority-based programming. The goal is to provide sound infrastructure and a clean, safe environment. The DPW is organized into five divisions – Highway, Traffic, Sewer, Engineering and Fleet Maintenance, each under the direction of a manager. Street Lighting is the responsibility of National Grid. The Fire Department's Signal Alarm Division maintains traffic signals.

Sewage Collection, Treatment and Disposal

The sewage collection, treatment, and disposal systems are considered adequate for the developed portions of the City. Sewage collection service areas remain largely the same as in 1992 with most of the developed portions of the City being served. Service areas include the entire city east of I-295 and a small portion west of I-295 between Plainfield Pike on the north and Scituate Avenue on the south. Sewage is not collected in the public system in most of western Cranston, where onsite wastewater treatment systems (OWTS) are used instead.

Sewage flows largely by gravity to the sewage treatment plant, which has been upgraded since 1992. The plant discharges into the Pawtuxet River, as do two other treatment plants located in other municipalities. The City has a 30-year contract (1997-2027) with *Veolia Water* to maintain and operate the sewage treatment plant. The plant has excess capacity of approximately 4 million gallons a day (MGD). While actual flow is approximately 12 MGD, some components of the plant reportedly could support a capacity of 20 MGD.

Despite this excess capacity at the sewage treatment plant, illegal tie-ins that discharge to the stormwater runoff system remain an enforcement issue that must be addressed. The City owns and has the responsibility to maintain the sewer lines, and so must find an approach to find and eliminate these connections.

Treated effluent from the sewage treatment plant is discharged into the Pawtuxet River, which flows into the upper reaches of Narragansett Bay (Providence River). The U.S. EPA had mandated a 'flow augmentation' program to increase in-stream flow and water quality in the Pawtuxet River. An agreement was reached with Providence Water Supply Board to maintain acceptable flows within the river.

6. SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Maintaining sufficient water flow in the Pawtuxet River, to meet the EPA’s water standard requirements from stormwater runoff remains the most critical sewage system issue. A discharge of properly-treated effluent from the sewage treatment plant into the river dilutes, and therefore helps reduce, existing pollutant concentrations in the river.

Western Cranston’s Sewer Line

A pressurized sewer line was built between the FLPE plant in Johnston and the sewage treatment plant in Cranston. Through an agreement, Cranston supplies effluent from its treatment plant for the Johnston gas-fired power plant. FLPE uses the water for cooling purposes and returns the used water directly to the Cranston treatment plant for further treatment and then discharge. The return sewer line runs through western Cranston, part of the way down Pippin Orchard Road. Connections are by City permit authorized by the Department of Public Works and only in certain locations.

Future development in western Cranston will require individual in-ground septic treatment systems unless the projects can tap into the pressurized sewer line, but the City’s policy is not to extend sewer service to the remainder of western Cranston.

Potential Non-Sewered Parcels at Buildout

The number of potential parcels without sewers when the City is built out indicates the number of on-site wastewater treatment systems, or the related potential demand to provide the same number of new sewer line connections.

The Assessor’s records show there are over 32,000 parcels in Cranston with 5,503 parcels without buildings and 26,497 parcels with buildings. Of those 26,497 developed parcels, 22,241 records are on the “Sewer Roll”, meaning that 4,256 parcels with buildings are not connected to sewers. The Sewer Roll also shows 417 parcels, where sewer lines exist but are not connected to the sewer system.

Adding the buildout estimate for western Cranston in the area west of I-295 southbound and west of the Alpine Estates subdivision, which projects a 45 percent increase in individual septic systems, equals the total potential parcels without sewer and so with on-site septic systems:

- 4,256 Built parcels without sewer
- +1,894 Potential additional parcels in western Cranston
- 6,150 Total potential parcels without sewer

Connecting these 6,150 parcels to the City sewage lines would increase existing connections by over 25 percent to the sewage treatment plant, which as previously noted has excess capacity. However, on-site sewage treatment and disposal has proven to be a reliable method of protecting the public health and reducing public costs for centralized system operation and maintenance. Unless certain community goals are achieved, such as providing benefits to the adjacent neighborhood or the City adding all of these connections is not recommended.

Water Supply

The Providence Water Supply Board manages Cranston’s water supply as part of a much broader water system. The Scituate Reservoir is the water source for this system. The Providence Water Supply Board distributes water to approximately 60 percent of the state’s population, including all of Cranston except for a small area serviced by the Kent County Water Authority and those homes in western Cranston served by individual wells.

The public water lines in Cranston distribute water over an area larger than the sewer service. The only area not currently served is the most western portion of Cranston. The homes and properties in that area are served by individual wells.

Water lines and connections continue to be added in western Cranston as new projects are developed with investments from private developers to support their projects. However, there is a continued need to conserve the water supply in Scituate Reservoir. Consequently extension of water lines in western Cranston is not a recommended policy unless, as with sewers, certain community goals are achieved such as providing for conservation development.

6. SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Educational Facilities

Cranston Public Schools educate about 11,000 students in 24 schools. As of November 2004, there were:

- 3,640 students in two high schools
- 2,707 students in three middle schools
- 4,764 students in 18 elementary schools

The most recent school construction project was the Orchard Farm Elementary School, which followed the School Department's adherence to the neighborhood elementary school model and serves neighborhoods in western Cranston.

School enrollment is expected to decrease over the next several years. According to the Performance Audit of the City schools (September 2004), school enrollment peaked in 2002 at 11,269, and is expected to decrease to 10,894 by 2008. Projections from the Planning Department also show a decrease in enrollment to 10,909 in 2008. These projections are also supported by a continuing decrease in residential building permits in the City over the ten years between 1993 and 2003. These changes are equivalent to a little over a three percent decrease in enrollment by 2008 from the 2002 peak.

This suggests that there will be no short-term demand for a new school building program. However, improvement, possible expansion, maintenance and operation of the schools will continue to require attention and budgeted funds.

Fire Protection

Fire Department services include both fire emergency and emergency medical (EMS) calls together with inspections and licensing. The importance of the EMS function is identified by the fact that 72% of the over 13,000 calls made by the Fire Department in 2004 were for medical emergencies.

In 1992, the Comprehensive Plan called for converting the former Oaklawn Volunteer Station on Hope Road to a full-time manned station, and to monitor growth in western Cranston. In 1995 the City closed down all four remaining volunteer stations and went all "full-time" with six stations:

- Station One: Edgewood on Park Avenue
- Station Two: Auburn HQ on Pontiac Avenue
- Station Three: Knightsville on Cranston Street
- Station Four: Garden City on Sockanosset Cross Road
- Station Five: Oaklawn on Oaklawn Avenue
- Station Six: Comstock on Scituate Avenue

Additional information and analysis of Fire Department facilities has recently been made available in the Performance Audit of the Police and Fire Departments issued January 2004.

Police

The City has constructed a new Police Station on part of the Narragansett Brewery site on Cranston Street. The former Police Station has been vacated and is available for other municipal uses or can be sold for private development.

Library Facilities

The Library Department has two projects that are proposed in the near-term. The first is the Arlington branch library. Currently the City library system includes the Arlington Reading Room. However, the Arlington branch library is proposed as a gift from Cranston Printworks of a building and vacant land. Using federal grant funds and other sources, the existing, historic structure would be possibly relocated and renovated to serve as the branch library facility. Discussions continue with the City, Library and the Print Works.

The other project for a new branch library in western Cranston was listed in the 1992 Plan. A parcel of land on Scituate Avenue was acquired with impact fee funds and is still available for the library. However, as described in the Land Use Element, the siting of this branch facility in the proposed Village Center could provide other benefits. The Library Department remains open to this option, particularly if the concept helps advance the construction of the branch.

Municipal Records Facilities

City Hall, similar to other historic buildings of its era, did not program in sufficient space to meet record storage needs. A centralized site that accommodates record storage should be created.

6. SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Solid Waste Disposal

Although the 1992 Plan suggested the need for alternatives, solid waste continues to be sent to the expanded Central Landfill in Johnston. However, the ever-increasing costs for municipal solid waste disposal suggest that recycling and diversion of the waste stream (i.e. composting, waste-to-energy) should be considered as a means to reduce the reliance on the Johnston landfill.

Municipal Facilities in the Western Cranston Village Center

The 1992 Plan proposed a Western Cranston Village Center at the intersection of Scituate and Pippin Orchard Roads. Two of the corners of this intersection have been developed with a church and a garden store/nursery which leaves an opportunity to add other complementary uses that support the Village Center concept. City facilities, such as the branch library would support the concept of the Village Center by adding civic activities. Consequently, the placement of these facilities within the Village Center is recommended.

Road Improvement Plans and Maintenance Funds

Due to a lack of capital investment over the past several years, many of the city's roads need resurfacing according to the DPW. An inventory needs to be made to identify the condition of City roads and establish criteria to assign priorities for improvements. This plan could then become the basis for City funding.

Over the past several years, road maintenance funds have come from annual budget allocations, but they have been limited.. Maintenance of various roadway median areas is aided by the "Adopt a Spot" program, which has identified 80 sites of which approximately 50 are under contract with different private companies.

Many traffic regulatory signs are faded, vandalized, or no longer meet highway standards. Rolfe Square merchants are apparently maintaining some of the public signs within their business district. This could be used as a model for other areas. Otherwise, public funds should be set aside yearly for sign maintenance.

Building Upgrades and Maintenance

Many city-owned buildings are not in compliance with current fire code according to the DPW. An inventory must identify the condition of the City buildings and establish criteria to assign priorities for action.

This highlights a larger issue regarding building maintenance. Common problems with municipal buildings stem from minimal budgets that address short-term problems, but not long-term maintenance issues. Based on review of other municipal budgets nationwide, it is recommended that the City budgets \$0.96/sq.ft. per building space or 5% to 6% of net operating revenues for capital asset maintenance. However, local maintenance funds have actually been reduced in recent years.



Cranston School Department Administration, Briggs Building on Park Avenue



Part III. Plan Strategies and Actions

Focusing the Programs

Services and facilities are “budget-intensive” requiring a commitment to long-term, significant public funding. Consequently, creating a focus for the investments in the capital program and for continued services in the annual budgets will help to lead decisions on how facilities and services should be delivered within the City.

There are three principles that will help provide this focus:

- The primary purpose of the City services should be to protect and improve the public health and safety;
- With health and safety secure, the City must strive to improve the quality of life through education, social services, and civic activities;

Consistent maintenance and continuous upgrading of City properties and buildings is needed to protect those investments and maintain their long-term service to the community.

Using these precepts, improvements, new services and improved facilities can be prioritized through the Capital Improvement Program and other financing mechanisms. Capital improvement requests are submitted to the Planning Department, which annually prepares the Citywide Capital Improvement Program. Following are the specific actions recommended with these principles in mind.

Actions for Services and Facilities

Street Maintenance and Management

Accessibility on streets throughout the City is dependent on DPW maintenance. The DPW needs a consistent cash flow to implement a pavement management program. In the recent past, the City’s ability to bond was severely hindered due to its financial condition. Cranston

now has some catching up to do. Key actions to maintain safe and efficient travel include:

- A repaving and crack-sealing program to improve the safety of City streets. Sidewalk repairs also need to be addressed. Tree roots create cracked and uneven sidewalks when they are not trimmed.
- Adequate funds must be allocated each year to plow City roadways. Municipalities throughout the State must compete with the Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) and each other to contract with the pool of private plow operators.
- DPW crews sweep streets once a year in late spring to remove accumulated winter sand and debris. This practice should continue.
- Traffic, parking and other street signs need to be replaced through a detailed inventory and replacement program. This will require staff and money to identify the sign locations and replace them.
- The signage program could also be used as an opportunity to create citywide sign design standards. A consistent signage standard, such as the one which was used for the bicycle loop, would help create a sense of place for residents and visitors.
- Where the budget allows, the popular homeowner-City matching payment program for tree planting should be funded on a regular basis.

Establish a Capital Sewer Fund.

Sewer funding has been inadequate to pay for needed extensions and repairs because of other funding priorities. The existing sewer fees can only be used for maintenance and operating expenses because the amount is insufficient for major capital projects, such as extending sewer lines.

- A separate capital sewer fund is needed to assure maintenance and funding for sewers.
- Assign a sewer impact fee for new homes to fund future sewer projects.

Locate and Disconnect Illegal Sewer Connections

Stormwater flows are the main infiltration and inflow issues in the sewer system. The DPW is aware of the significant number of illegal tie-ins of stormwater drainage from private properties to the City's sewerage system. It is believed that some residents have connected their roof drains to the sewer system. These flows add to the volume of effluent at the City's sewage treatment plant. Although there is excess capacity at the plant, the additional flows add to the public costs for treatment.

The City and/or Veolia Water needs to test for these connections to confirm they exist, and disconnect them where they do exist. The City needs to be able to inventory and inspect properties and disconnect illegal stormwater connections to the sewer. The City needs to determine the most appropriate procedure to implement such a program due to the legal issues involved with public access to private properties.

Nutrient Reduction and Water Flow in the Pawtuxet River

The EPA has ordered nutrient reductions in the Pawtuxet River to improve water quality. The plan is to reroute polluted river water into one of the spare sewage tanks for treatment and discharge back into the River. The Pawtuxet River Watershed District and the State Revolving Fund would pay for this treatment. The State portion would be repaid at 2.2 percent interest. A six-million-dollar project at the sewage treatment plant to reduce discharges of nitrogen and ammonia to the Pawtuxet River is scheduled for construction in the near future. When complete, nitrogen discharges from the facility should drop by more than 40 percent.

- This project should be advanced to significantly improve the river's water quality and reduce the City's environmental liabilities.
- As water quality improves, the City should take steps to improve public access to and recreation on the river.

Actions for Building Improvements

Building Maintenance

The fact that many city-owned buildings had fire code violations is indicative of the City's failure to adequately maintain public buildings to meet current building standards. The funding to address these and other building conditions as well as to provide for general maintenance is needed consistently across budget years. Ensure the building maintenance budget line items receive appropriate and consistent funding.

Energy Conservation

Many City buildings' heating and lighting systems are outdated. Some lighting upgrades are being paid for by National Grid as an incentive to conserve energy by using more efficient lighting systems/fixtures. Heating and cooling requirements for all public buildings create large energy demands that the City must fund.

- Improve energy efficiency to reduce long-term energy costs, and improve the quality of the office work environment.

Emergency Fire Service

While not densely populated, the southwestern area of the City has the longest emergency response time from the existing City fire stations.

- As western Cranston continues to grow and change, the City should continue to evaluate the need for expanded fire station service in the southwestern part of the City.

Libraries

As of January 2005, approximately \$300,000 had been raised for the new library branch in western Cranston, currently proposed for a site on Scituate Avenue. However, the building plans have not yet been finalized. Within the Village Center concept, combining the branch library with other activities could create a self-sustaining center.

6. SERVICES AND FACILITIES

The City is working with the Cranston Print Works to convert the former church that the Print Works owns on Cranston Street, to become the future Arlington Branch Library. This project will require the renovation and possible movement of the historic structure.

- A branch library in the Village Center alternative should be considered as the concept as the Village Center evolves.

City Hall/ School Complex

Proposed improvements to City Hall and the adjoining High School and School Administration buildings include better storage facilities, energy-efficiency, and a new library for the school, along with new, flexible classroom space to meet educational programming needs and appropriate facility size.

Actions for Western Cranston

Individual, on-site septic systems and drinking water wells are regulated by the RI Department of Environmental Management (DEM) and the RI Department of Health, respectively, and not the City. However, the City has responsibilities to protect ground and surface water quality.

There are three major utility lines that service sections of western Cranston:

- A water service line built by the Providence Water Supply Board;
- The “clean” delivery sewer line to Johnston; and,
- The 11-mile sewer returns line between the power plant (Florida Power & Light) at the Johnston Resource Recovery Station and the Cranston Sewage Treatment Plant, which could take local sewage flows under certain conditions.

Water Service

Further expansion of the water supply system in western Cranston is problematic where elevations are over 400 feet because there is a need for additional pumping stations. In addition, the adjacent Kent County Water District does not want to extend water lines into western Cranston. However, the Providence Water Supply Board does provide the water service to the northern portion of western Cranston.

Sewer Service

The City allows connections to the RISE return sewer line under a permit application with specific design requirements as authorized by the Director of the City’s DPW. There is excess capacity in the line, but the line is pressurized due to the topography, which substantially increases connection costs. Pressurized service lines are more expensive than gravity flow lines due to the need to provide pumping facilities. Currently, there is no public money specifically targeted for this area, but private developers have asked for permission to connect to these utilities at their own cost.

Water and Sewer Service Policy

The City needs a clear policy regarding sewer and water utility expansion in western Cranston. This policy should cover both public investments as well as private development. To fully service western Cranston, the City would need a capital fund for water and sewer extension and need to upgrade the connection policy for private development.

- Create a policy for private development in western Cranston to allow connections to the sewer service (RISE return line), only if the development is consistent with the goals and policies of this Comprehensive Plan.
- Maintain the fee system for water system connections, but also utilize the private investment in new development to support the Comprehensive Plan goals, the same as with the sewer policy.

Ordinance to Establish a Septic System District

A Septic System Management District in western Cranston could be created to better manage the long-term public health and protect natural resources without extending sewers and waterlines. Under this district, owners of individual septic systems would pay a fee to the City. The City would use the revenue to contract with a private company to monitor and inspect individual septic systems to ensure that they are properly maintained by the owner, and to provide homeowners with recommendations on how to maintain their septic systems. This would decrease the number of septic system failures from lack of proper maintenance by owners. This is of particular importance due to the substantial number of septic systems that are both existing and anticipated in western Cranston. The City has a

preliminary report that recommended a review and monitoring system for septic tanks. However, the City currently does not have the resources to staff such an effort.

- Consider establishing a Septic System District in western Cranston in which owners of individual septic systems would pay a fee to the City for septic system management.

Actions for the Capital Improvement Program

The City's Planning Department recommends how revenues and other collected fees should be spent in the Capital Improvement Program (CIP). There is significant coordination between the Planning Department and the other city departments during the CIP process. However, the process could be facilitated with the establishment of criteria and guidelines for all public facilities. The City could identify its critical needs and priorities regarding capital projects and then ensure the funding is programmed to support high priority projects.

A particular issue is that facility maintenance funds are traditionally low in comparison to the need for maintenance because of other City priorities. As an example, maintenance under the DPW used to be funded at about \$500,000 a year during the 1980s and 1990s. Now their maintenance items are funded at about a third of that level and it shows. As a result, there is significant "deferred maintenance" on public facilities and more emphasis on new facilities. This imbalance should be addressed.

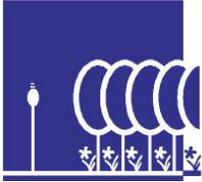
- The City should develop a rigorous set of criteria for Capital Improvement Program planning. These criteria will be used to evaluate the priority of funding a particular project against other requests. The City departments could then use these criteria when they make their capital program requests.
- The City should establish two funds to maintain the existing sewer and water system and to maintain a number of other City facilities such as streets, sidewalks and signs. The first fund is the Sewer Fund that is described above. The second fund is a General Maintenance Fund financed by bonds and tied to the City's Capital Improvement Program (CIP).

Table 6.2. Summary of the Proposed Actions and Responsibilities for this Plan

	Action	Responsibility
Services and Facilities		
SF-1	Create a Pavement Maintenance Plan. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Program a regular series of improvements to the street system. 	DPW
SF-2	Establish a signage program to replace street signs. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a consistent design standard that defines the community and individual neighborhoods where the signs are erected. 	DPW
SF-3	Establish and maintain a Capital Sewer Fund.	City Council Planning Department DPW
SF-4	Determine steps to resolve illegal connections to sewerage system.	DPW
SF-5	Advance nutrient reduction for the wastewater treatment plant discharge to the Pawtuxet River <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set the goals to improve conditions and flows within the river. <i>Related Action: SF-5, NR-22</i>	City Council DPW Viola Water
Building Improvements		
SF-6	Adopt energy conservation standards for City facilities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a long-term program to reduce energy costs for the City. <i>Related Action: NR-3</i>	DPW Building Maintenance
SF-7	Continue to evaluate the need for a new municipal fire station in the southwestern part of the City. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate in accordance with the growth of Western Cranston. 	Planning Department Fire Department
SF-8	Promote the construction of library facilities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Western Cranston branch library 	Planning Department Library Department
SF-9	Coordinate City Hall, High School, and School Administration building projects. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide design and construction oversight for greater efficiency in use of existing space. 	Planning Department School Department
Western Cranston		
SF-10	Allow sewer and water tie-ins to the existing sewer and water lines in western Cranston where appropriate.	City Council Planning Commission Planning Department DPW Public Utilities
SF-11	Establish a Septic System District. <i>Related Action: NR-7</i>	City Council Planning Department DPW

6. SERVICES AND FACILITIES

SF-12	Explore the alternative of siting the new western Cranston branch library within the Village Center concept. <i>Related Action: LU-11</i>	Library Department Planning Department
Capital Improvement Program		
SF-13	Develop criteria for priority ranking of capital facilities as part of the City's Capital Improvement Program.	City Council Planning Commission Planning Department DPW
SF-14	Establish and maintain a Facilities Maintenance Fund. Set aside funds for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roadway pavement repairs and upgrades • Sidewalks • Street trees • Signs • Snow plowing • Energy efficiency in public buildings. 	City Council Planning Department DPW
SF-15	Continue to identify existing facilities, which could be used for records storage. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If no such space is available, construct additional vault space to meet records storage requirements. 	City Clerk DPW
SF-16	Continue to seek consolidation of municipal offices and services in the vicinity of City Hall. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide room for future expansion. 	Mayor City Council
SF-17	Establish a program to reevaluate the fiscal impact fees on an regular basis	Planning Commission Planning Dept. Building Inspector City Council



Introduction to the Open Space and Recreation Element

Most natural and manmade features such as wetlands, water bodies, open grassland, and forests can be enjoyed as open space. Together with the built environment of the stadium, ball fields, courts, golf courses, ice rinks and other recreation facilities, Cranston has the resources that contribute to the overall quality of life for its residents and visitors.

Though eastern Cranston is intensely developed and urbanized, it has important recreation areas and valuable water bodies such as the Narragansett Bay and the Pawtuxet River system. Western Cranston is characterized by large undeveloped tracts of open space and farmland, ponds, rivers and small streams, with low density residential developments. The City has been successful in obtaining significant open space in Western Cranston as well as establishing bicycle routes and paths, as well as the Historic Scenic Farm Loop (see Figure 7.4). However, there is a need to provide neighborhood recreational sites at the residential level. The City needs to develop a policy as to how it will provide said facilities as residential development occurs.

Key Challenges

Specific issues that need to be addressed, which also coincides with goals for the Land Use and Natural Resources elements, include:

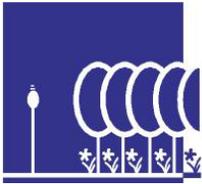
- The need to manage residential growth to accommodate recreational and open space uses in western Cranston;
- The need to improve recreational facilities throughout the City to meet projected population growth and distribution;
- The need to acquire, protect, and manage open land in western Cranston;

- The need to create multiple access points to City shorelines including Narragansett Bay, the Pocasset and Pawtuxet rivers, and the City's several urban ponds;
- Development pressures on vacant land in western Cranston that may preclude open space acquisition goals.

Key Strategies

Key recommendations and conclusions include:

- Establishing partnerships with non-profit groups to ensure land can continue to be acquired and protected;
- Modifying zoning regulations that to incorporate the latest tools and techniques to protect and manage open space (such as Conservation Development and Transfer of Development Rights);
- Obtaining additional open space for both active and passive recreational uses;
- Supporting existing programs to ensure open space and recreation needs are met now and for future generations;
- Ensuring that adequate funds are available to maintain open space areas and recreational facilities;
- Reestablishing community garden program in both eastern and western Cranston where appropriate.



Part I. Summary and Accomplishments of the 1992 Plan

Introduction

The Open Space and Recreation element of the 1992 Comprehensive Plan focused on identifying and adding open space and recreational areas to the existing resources in the City. This section summarizes the issues and accomplishments of the 1992 Plan.

1992 Open Space and Recreation Conditions

The City, at the time of the 1992 Plan, had approximately 1,907 acres of land designated for open space and recreational uses. These areas included private, state, and city-owned properties and ranged in size and use from small play areas to golf courses and marinas.

Potential Open Space of the 1992 Plan

The 1992 Plan provided a methodology to identify and map existing open space and a set of physical, environmental, and cultural characteristics that supported this identification. This information was overlaid on a map to establish primary and secondary open space areas. The following table lists the set of primary potential open space areas.

An enhanced value of open space as a public amenity was identified as an important component of these areas when they are linked or contiguous. These linkages such as a system of trails, paths, stream belts, or other corridors or “greenways” greatly enhance and support their use. Several greenways were identified in the 1992 Plan.

River and Brook Corridors

Smaller rivers and brooks in Cranston, which provide natural habitat and some recreational uses, should be protected through land use controls such as buffer zones and management practices such as debris removal.

Table 7-1. Primary Potential Open Space Areas in 1992 Plan

Bellefont Pond Area	Pawtuxet River Corridor
Burlingame Road/Hope Road	Pippin Orchard Road/Scituate Avenue
Furnace Hill Brook	Pocasset River Corridor
Meshanticut Brook	

Source: Cranston Comprehensive Plan, 1992.

Scenic Roads

Scenic roads, such as Seven Mile Road and Laten Knight Road, offer visual continuity between open space sites. They should be designated as scenic roads to acknowledge their picturesque qualities and provide a visual link with Cranston’s rich agricultural heritage.

Waterfront Access

The 1992 Plan reported that the City has limited access to its shoreline. In additions its ponds are underutilized due to both a small number of access points and the poor water quality. The Plan proposed to increase indirect and direct access to both the ponds and the tidal waters of Narragansett Bay by increasing views and formal recognition of access points. The following table identifies eight proposed access points.

Table 7-2. Proposed Access Areas of the 1992 Plan

Arnold Avenue	Printworks Pond
Blackamore Pond	Randall’s Pond
Norwood Avenue	Sheldon Street
Ocean Avenue	Spectacle Pond

Source: Cranston Comprehensive Plan, 1992.

7. OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

Conserving Farmlands

Western Cranston has prime farmland that is under substantial residential development pressure. Preservation techniques used to preserve land has been mainly through financial and not regulatory means. The 1992 Plan suggested that the concept of permitting clustered residential development would work better than very large lot zoning as a method to retain prime farmlands.

Recreational Standards and Needs

The 1992 Plan proposed new standards for recreation that refined the definitions of parks and playfields, and revised the size ranges and services areas of the various types of facilities. It also addressed the existing recreational needs based on population, which resulted in the need for additional acres for community playfields and major community parks.

Future Recreational Needs

Future recreational needs were identified for western Cranston due to the anticipated growth in this part of the City. Undeveloped rural areas have been converted to residential development, and therefore creating a need for public open space and recreation facilities. The plan suggested the need for one playground an acre in size based on projected population growth by 2010.

Opportunities for Recreation

The 1992 Plan documented the need for additional facilities due to insufficient and outdated facilities, heavy use, and limited number of indoor facilities. New and expanded facilities were identified at eight city or state-owned recreation sites (see Table 7-3).

Table 7-3. Recreation Sites that need additional facilities

Brayton Field	Fay Field
Calise Field	Glen Hills Elementary School
Curran State Park	Mayfield Avenue
Doric Avenue Playfield	Stone Hill Elementary School

Source: Cranston Comprehensive Plan, 1992.

Changes to the Plan since 1992

The Cranston City Council approved the following changes to the 1992 Comprehensive Plan.

- The City Council amended the Comprehensive Plan to recognize the “cornfields” as a site independent of the Boys Training School Redevelopment (Chapel View).
- The “cornfields” was designated as an area which would allow “limited economic opportunities” focusing on recreation [The “cornfields” were subsequently developed into a golf complex].



City soccer field



Marker at Itri Memorial Square in Knightsville

1992 Plan Actions and Accomplishments

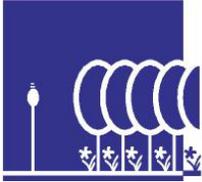
Table 7-4 summarizes the Open Space and Recreation Actions from the 1992 Comprehensive Plan and identifies which of these have been accomplished.

Table 7-4. Accomplishments of the 1992 Comprehensive Plan

Action	1992 Actions	Accomplishments and Changes
Capital Improvements		
OS-1	Acquire key potential open space parcels.	The city acquired several large tracts of land in western Cranston totaling over 300 acres from 2002-2004. They are designated for passive recreation uses, habitat protection, and future community needs.
OS-2	Develop a community park.	The City developed the Briggs Farm Recreational Site in the 1990s. Phase III was completed in 2007.
OS-3	Develop a community recreation center.	An indoor youth center was constructed in collaboration with the Cranston YMCA.
OS-4	Develop additional recreational facilities.	Briggs Farm Recreational Field was created to support field games. There were many recreational facility improvements to elementary schools. The Cranston Bike Path and the Cross City Bicycle Corridor were constructed.
Improvements to Existing Facilities		
OS-5	Continue to upgrade and expand recreational opportunities at existing sites to serve all segments of the population.	This action is ongoing.
OS-6	Improve existing public access to the waterfront.	The sidewalk and boat ramp at Still House Cove were reconstructed in 2004.
OS-7	Transfer selected school recreation sites to Recreation Department jurisdiction, as appropriate.	School recreation sites at Park View, Stadium, Western Hills, and Bain are under the jurisdiction of the Recreation Department.
Administrative and Management Actions		
OS-8	Use a variety of methods to protect Cranston's open space.	The City has made substantial progress in a number of methods to protect open space including out-right acquisition, development rights acquisition, farm, forest, and open space taxation, and donations through subdivision development.
OS-9	Designate and protect scenic roads in Cranston.	The Historic Scenic Farm Route in western Cranston was designated by City Council resolution. The City is currently participating in a statewide effort to identify scenic roads throughout the City. This should include methods of protection.
OS-10	Provide adequate funding for maintenance and improvements of City-owned recreational facilities.	Maintenance of recreational facilities is ongoing. User fees are used minimally. Leagues do participate in maintenance and have funded such improvements as storage buildings, irrigation systems, and similar facilities.
OS-11	Negotiate with the State of Rhode Island to improve recreational opportunities at State-owned sites.	Negotiations are ongoing.

7. OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

Actions Requiring Further Study		
OS-12	Investigate creation of bike paths in conjunction with scenic roads.	Bike routes were designated along two scenic roads: the Historic Scenic Farm Route in western Cranston and Narragansett Boulevard in eastern Cranston.
OS-13	After-school recreation programs.	This action was partially accomplished due to the recently constructed youth center in collaboration with the YMCA and the School Department.
OS-14	Investigate improving water quality and access to Cranston's ponds to increase recreational and natural resource value.	Pond monitoring has been taking place at Fenner and Blackamore ponds. Fuss & O'Neil is conducting a storm drain study. Potential storm drain outfall improvements may improve water quality further, which could make this a viable policy to continue. Although there was a pond study in 1999-2000, no action has occurred since.
OS-15	Investigate adoption of River Corridor Overlay District	This action was not accomplished.
OS-16	Revitalize the Land Trust	The Land Trust was revitalized. It was the lead advocate in acquiring the Knight Farm, Ringrose Farm and the development rights for Cloverdale Farm, the Good Earth Farm properties. In collaboration with the City Planning Department, they developed the Historic Scenic Farm Route.



PART II - Current Conditions and Issues

Introduction

This section provides information about Cranston's current open space and recreational resources. The goal is to identify the types and amounts of open space in Cranston, support management of existing properties, and meet current and future recreational needs of the residents of Cranston.

This element has been prepared utilizing data from several sources including the city's Geographic Information System (GIS), city officials and staff, and from site visits.

Obtaining an Open Space System

Open space is not just a collection of parks and playgrounds that serve the local population. Open space also refers to the corridors that link and connect these areas to create a natural continuous path or "greenway".

These greenways have many benefits to the users. They provide:

- a much larger system to use than a collection of individual recreational areas,
- an increase in access points.

Although not all areas are physically connected, there are many paths and routes, such as the Cranston Bicycle Network, that help the users get from one place to another with signs, landmarks, and maps.

Open Space and Recreational Areas

There are over 565 acres of dedicated recreation sites, including community parks, playfields, and schools, in Cranston according to the City's GIS data base (see Figure 7-2). Most of these sites are east of I-295 - only three are in western Cranston.

They include schools, playfields, state parks, and similar related recreational areas. Many are for single use such as playgrounds and several are multi-use, such as Briggs Farm, and include jogging tracks, ball fields, and other areas for organized sports and recreational activities.

The relatively small population in western Cranston has not yet created a large demand for additional recreation sites. However, citywide sports participation is reportedly increasing; with demands for active field sports, such as baseball, soccer, and lacrosse; creating increased scheduling and field maintenance demands. This need could be alleviated with the creation of additional field areas in the central and western areas of the City.

The National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) has been the most widely cited authority on parks and recreation area standards. According to NRPA standards, a local open space system should include about 8 acres of active recreation space per 1,000 people. According to these figures, Cranston should have about 640 acres, based on a population of 80,000 residents, as compared to the 565 acres already dedicated.

Cranston Bicycle Network

In 2001, the City of Cranston, in partnership with several bicycle and recreational groups and the RIDOT, established a bicycle route that crosses the City in an east-west direction. The Cranston Bicycle Network, initially called the Cross City Bicycle Corridor, was designed for recreational riders and uses side streets to avoid Park Avenue on the east to west route.

Figure 7.2 Aerial View of Curan State Park



Recent Open Space and Recreation Projects and Programs

The route travels across Cranston in basically two east-west routes that connect and loop in several points (see Figure 7-3). It also connects riders to other parts of the State’s bicycle routes. Signs identifying “Cranston Bicycle Network” are displayed along its entire route.

This route essentially links many other areas in Cranston that allow users to enjoy a wide range of recreational opportunities throughout Cranston and beyond. There are many state and local parks, scenic routes such as the Historic Scenic Farm Route, State designated bike lanes on Narragansett Boulevard and Scituate Avenue, State

greenways, and other similar sites and places to visit along and near this route

Future Bicycle Paths

Several bicycle paths are either being planned or designed as part of the Cranston Bicycle Network. They include the Pontiac Secondary Bike Path and the South Elmwood Spur Bicycle Path.

Several bicycle paths are either being planned or designed as part of the Cranston Bicycle Network. They include the Pontiac Secondary Bike Path and the South Elmwood Spur Bicycle Path.

Figure 7-3. Cranston Bicycle Network



Source: RI DOT web site, www.dot.ri.us, 2004.

Cranston Historic Scenic Farm Route

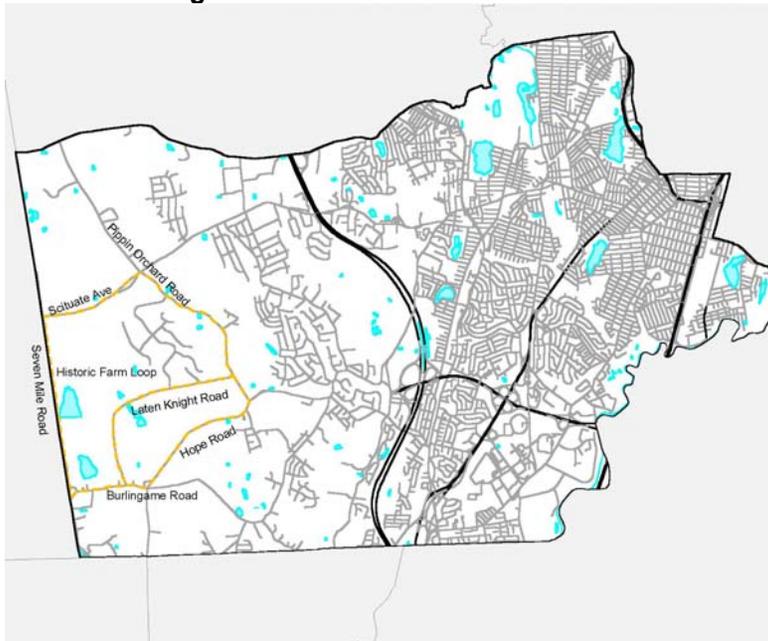
Residents and visitors now have the opportunity to travel a new designated route (established in 2004) that features active farms and farm stands along the rural roads of western Cranston. The Historic Scenic Farm Route was established to support the common goals of agricultural preservation, scenic vistas, preservation of open space, retention of the rural landscape, and support the local economy of existing and potential agri-tourism businesses.

This Route travels along several roads including Seven Mile Road and Laten Knight Road (see Figure 7-4). It also links to other open space and recreational areas including Curran State Park and the western routes of the Cranston Bicycle Network.

Recent Acquisitions

As noted in the Natural Resources Element, the City acquired 16 parcels and over 350 acres of land that has been dedicated as open space in western Cranston. Most of the parcels are either farmed or forested. In addition, a parcel at the end of Park View Boulevard was purchased in eastern Cranston.

Figure 7-4. Historic Scenic Farm Route



Source: Cranston Planning Department, 2004.

Waterfront Access

Cranston has a diverse waterfront with many natural features including inland rivers and tidal waters with direct access to Narragansett Bay. This section of the Plan identifies existing waterfront resources and

potential opportunities to access them now and in the future so that the community can benefit from their uses and continued enjoyment.

Existing Coastal Access Points and Rights-of-Ways

The Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC) has the legal authority to designate public right-of-ways (ROWs) to the tidal waters of Rhode Island. The status of ROWs is updated through a process of discovery and designation. It should be noted, however, that CRMC designation does not determine its ownership, only its use.

The CRMC designated three public ROWs in Cranston (see Table 7-5). Three other sites were evaluated by CRMC, but they did not meet their designation criteria. Furthermore, these were the only sites identified as “public” in the 1992 Plan, and CRMC has not designated any more public sites since that time.

Table 7-5. Designated Public ROWs in Cranston (2004)

Aborn Street, south side
Aborn Street, westerly side
Seaview Avenue, west side

Source: Designation of Public Right-of-Ways to the Tidal Areas of the State, 2002-2003, CRMC web site, www.crmc.ri, October 2004.

Although CRMC only designates official ROWs to the tidal areas of Rhode Island communities, there may be other locations to tidal and non-tidal shorelines that provide public access. In fact, RI Sea Grant identified five locations as public access locations, as shown in the following table.

Table 7-6. Public Access Sites Designated by RI Sea Grant, 2004

Aborn Street Boat Ramp	Seaview Park
Arnold Avenue	Still House Cove
Ocean Avenue	

Source: RI Sea Grant, 2004

The 1992 Plan proposed eight public ROWs that are either informal access points, on either publicly owned land or private vacant land (see Table 7-7). The City should continue to pursue making them accessible to the public.

In 2005, the City spent over \$600,000 restoring Stillhouse Cove and improving access to this important public coastal property. The project included erosion control along the bank, new storm drain systems, restoration of a salt marsh, a new sidewalk, and landscaping improvements.

Table 7-7. Proposed Access Areas of the 1992 Plan

Arnold Avenue	Printworks Pond
Blackamore Pond	Randall's Pond
Norwood Avenue	Sheldon Street
Ocean Avenue	Spectacle Pond

Source: Cranston Comprehensive Plan, 1992

Pawtuxet River Use and Access

The Pawtuxet River provides excellent opportunities for the public to access its waters and shores. As water quality in the Pawtuxet River improves, there is an increasing demand for greater use and access, especially access points for canoeists and kayakers. There is already an extensive informal trail network established along the Pawtuxet, which is maintained by the Friends of the Pawtuxet. In addition, the State recently donated approximately 50 acres along the Pawtuxet to the Pawtuxet River Authority in the vicinity of Howard Industrial Park.

Potential Access Improvements

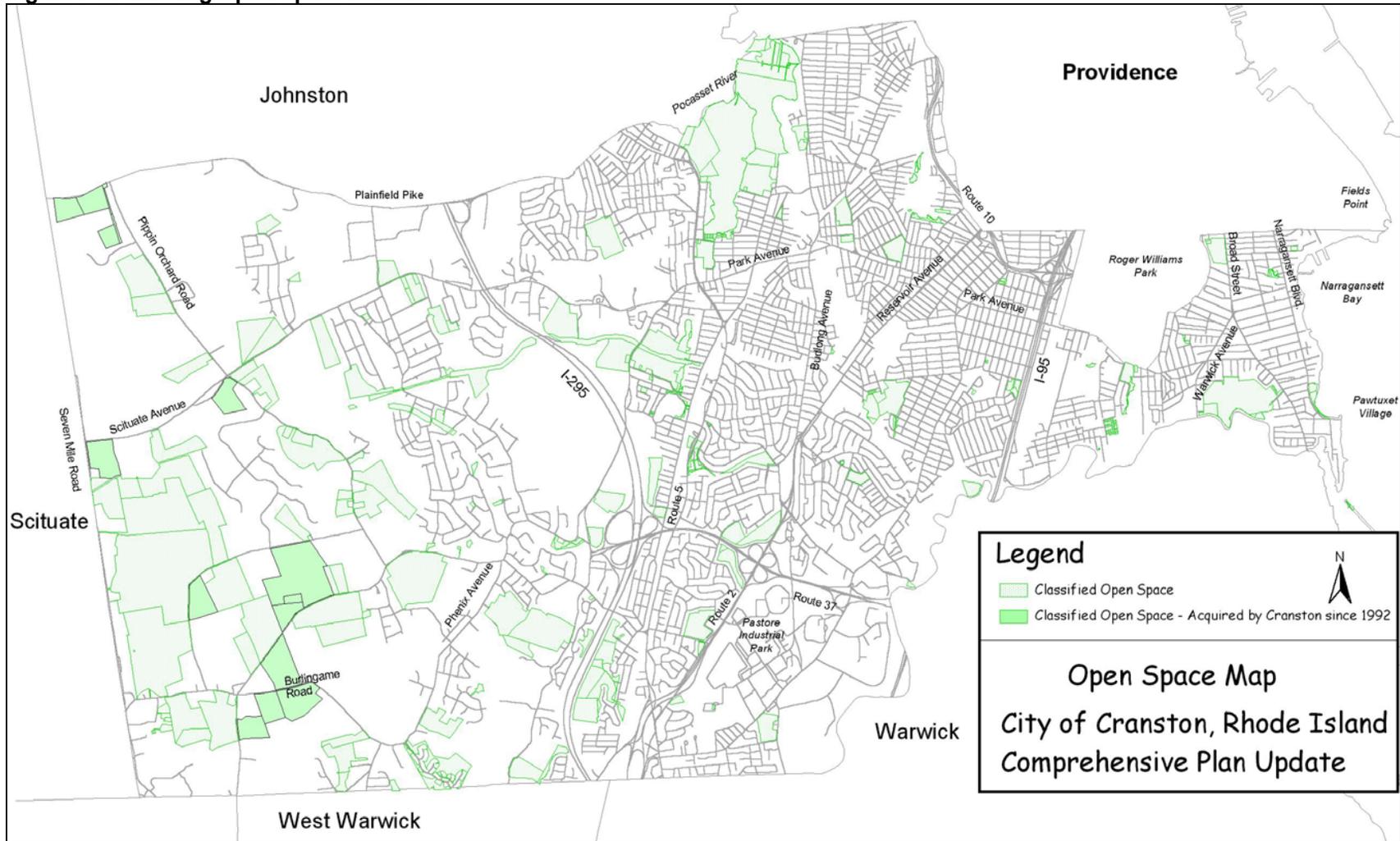
The Pawtuxet River Watershed Council has worked with many of the communities along the River to increase river activities through land acquisitions, grants, trail improvements, and public and private partnerships. The City of Cranston is planning for a public access point on the River near the industrial park off of Wellington Avenue. Nearby, the City of Warwick included an improved small boat ramp in Belmont Park as part of its Norwood Neighborhood Master Plan. Other potential river access points include sites at Howard Industrial Park and Fay Field.

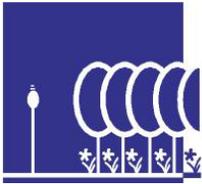
Pocket Parks

Opportunities for open space in Cranston should include small park areas as well as larger, formalized recreation sites. Pocket parks and vest pocket parks could provide areas for local residents and workers to enjoy a small place to walk or sit.

Pocket parks are generally located in dense, urbanized locations on lots that are too small to develop, on street corners, or in locations that have similar characteristics suitable for a small park setting. Many pocket parks are also located on small, urban lots that have been neglected or abandoned. These small urban areas are usually landscaped with plantings, paths, and benches, and should include public art and visual references to the local neighborhood and provide opportunities for community gardens.

Figure 7-5. Existing Open Space Parcels





PART III - Strategies and Actions

The purpose of the Open Space and Recreation element is to ensure that the needs of Cranston's residents and other users of open space areas and recreational sites and facilities are met now and in the future. Additionally, the City needs to establish other measures to protect habitats, to comply with land use regulations, to accommodate projected growth, and to ensure that additional lands are acquired and managed.

This section explains each of the actions necessary to resolve the previously identified open space issues and to support the goals and vision of this Plan. A summary of the proposed actions, time frames, and responsibilities for the Open Space and Recreation element is provided at the end of this section.

Open space needs to be acquired, protected, and managed in a variety of ways through capital improvements, maintenance, funding, administrative, management actions, and through additional studies. Each of these topics provides description of the actions for this element.

Capital Improvements

To ensure that open space needs are adequately met in the future and to improve access opportunities and recreation resources, the City will have to target specific open space properties for acquisition. The strategy for new open space acquisitions will be based on a priority of the following actions:

Programs to Enhance the Historic Scenic Farm Route

The recent creation of the Historic Scenic Farm Route has set the stage for increased awareness and protection of the agricultural and undeveloped properties in western Cranston. The City should continue to work with the West Bay Land Trust, RIDEM, and other organizations to promote the benefits of acquiring and protecting land along and encompassed by this route, or nearby, at a regional scale.

This will help support acquisition and management of additional properties. Furthermore, a Historic Farm Route zoning district should be adopted by the City Council to protect the remaining area farms.

Acquisition of Land Along the Rivers

Acquisition of land along the rivers would ensure that these valuable resources remain accessible to all users and are protected from runoff and other non-point and point source pollution. The action would work in conjunction with the proposed River Corridor Overlay District, which would ensure that lands not acquired remain protected by the district requirements. Very scenic areas exist along the City's urban rivers and ponds, yet are not easily accessed by most City residents.

Improved Public Access to the Shoreline

Cranston's greatest natural assets: the Pocasset and Pawtuxet Rivers and Narragansett Bay, need additional public access. Residents should have the opportunity to enjoy these assets with additional access points as well as with lateral access or paths along them. The City should improve public access through acquisitions, easements, and similar methods that support their use.

Expanded Greenways and Blueways

Cranston has numerous **greenways** (land corridors) and **blueways** (river corridors) that are part of larger systems such as the RI Greenway or the Pawtuxet River. The City should expand and add links to these designated recreational sites and paths with other recreational resources. This action will essentially "open the recreational door" to and between the different types of recreational destinations.

7. OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

New Pocket Parks in the Urban Neighborhoods

Pocket parks are small landscaped areas in dense urban blocks that allow local residents, and workers to obtain relief from the urban environment. New pocket parks should be developed and managed with neighborhood and business participation and should reflect the character of the area and residents.

Community Gardens

Community gardens provide excellent opportunities for residents to cultivate and enjoy their own fresh produce. When properly maintained, they have the ability to enhance the aesthetic character of the surrounding neighborhood. Efforts should be made by the City to prioritize the limited funding opportunities to acquire appropriate land of various sizes in the urban sections of the City to achieve this goal. Small parcels should be targeted in developed neighborhoods for small scale gardens, and larger parcels of City-owned open space land in the western section of the City should be divided into garden plots and made available for Cranston residents. City owned parcels along Scituate Avenue and Hope Road provide a perfect opportunity for this initiative.

Improvements to Existing Facilities

Expansion of Recreational Opportunities

Opportunities for the users of recreational sites and facilities should be upgraded and expanded to serve all segments of the population. Although this action was in the previous Plan, recreation programs and activities continually change and should match the current activities and needs of the users.

Improvements to Recreational Facilities

The Recreation Department is responsible for maintaining all parks and recreational sites except those on school properties. Recreation facilities need to be constantly maintained and periodically upgraded to provide the greatest opportunities for their users and ensure they do not fall into disrepair and unsafe conditions, especially where they are frequently used. The Briggs Field Recreational Facility, (Senator John Chaffee Complex), recently underwent a major expansion, which included new soccer/lacrosse fields, tennis courts, T-ball fields, and an expanded walking track.

Improved ADA Access to Recreational Facilities

The City must comply with ADA regulations to make new or altered recreational facilities accessible, and it should be proactively improving existing sites to ensure that people with disabilities have adequate and safe access to all sites. People of all ages, especially the very young and old, should have access to recreation sites. Some actions, such as additional rest rooms, may be cost prohibitive, but should be pursued. Other actions may require thoughtful management and planning such as better informative and directive signs.

Administrative and Management Actions

Coordination between City departments and extensive staff resources will be needed to implement the following actions:

Continued Acquisition of Open Space

The City has been very successful in establishing partnerships with local and regional non-profit groups to acquire and manage open space. The City should continue these partnerships with a particular focus on properties that link areas and uses such as the Historic Scenic Farm Route, the Cranston Bicycle Network, and the riverfronts.

New River Corridor Overlay District

Improved public access to land and water along the City's major rivers including the Pawtuxet and Pocasset is needed, while maintaining protection of the river environment. The City should adopt a River Corridor Overlay District to meet this need by creating linear buffers and increasing public access points along these rivers. The overlay district proposed in the previous Plan specified land use restrictions to protect water quality and scenic amenities along the rivers.

Expanded Cranston Bicycle Network

The City has been extremely successful with the creation of the Cross-City Bicycle route. The City should continue to invest in this recreational amenity and expand and improve its functionality and quality by creating links to other local and regional bicycle networks, recreational sites, and attractions such as RI Greenway and the South Elmwood Spur Bicycle Path. In addition, a dedicated East/West City Bicycle path should be constructed that utilizes the Providence Water Supply Board's aquifer right-of-way. This path could potentially run from the Scituate boarder, intersecting the Cranston Bike Path and terminating at Budlong Road. There is also potential for the adjacent Town of Scituate to extend this path into their municipality.

New Zoning to Support Conservation of Open Space

A key method to minimize the loss of open space in residential areas is to cluster the homes in a subdivision. With clustering, the housing units are closer together and more land remains open than if the lots were designed as a traditional subdivision. Clustering would leave more of the larger tracts in their natural state, provide potential walking paths, and could be combined with open space in adjacent subdivisions to create even larger natural tracts.

The City should consider stronger zoning tools that would require preservation of land in the future to actively preserve the area's agricultural history.

The City should adopt and encourage use of zoning regulations such as Conservation Residential Design or open space design to ensure that residential development maximizes the amount of preserved open space without reducing the number of homes built. In fact, the City should consider providing greater flexibility, when truly exemplary designs are proposed.

Expanded After-school Recreation Programs

The growing needs of our youth can be met by expanding after school recreation programs. This action, which was in the previous Plan, supports continuing the coordination between youth and school organizations, such as the YMCA, school department, and the recreation department.

Protection of Scenic Roads in Western Cranston

Many roads and the views along them in western Cranston are considered to have exceptional scenic qualities. To ensure they remain scenic, the City should protect them with a three-step process:

- Designate scenic areas;
- Establish awareness of this resource and create signage;
- Adopt requirements and guidelines that focus on protection of the viewshed and enhancement of the trees and vegetation along the road edges.

Actions Requiring Further Study

Improved Water Quality in Cranston's Ponds

Recreational opportunities in Cranston's ponds are negatively impacted by development around the ponds, runoff, misuse, and natural flooding hazards. Many ponds in Cranston need to be periodically checked for water quality to insure the health and safety of the people that use them.

Although some ponds have been monitored, in particular Fenner and Blackamore ponds, a more comprehensive check and management plan should be implemented to ensure the health of these natural systems is maintained or improved. Appropriate City departments, such as the Conservation Commission and Recreation Department, can support studies and investigations of the health of the City's ponds that will lead to improved water quality and access.

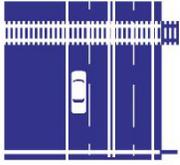
Open Space and Recreation Action Program

Table 7.8. Summary of the Proposed Actions and Responsibilities for this Plan

	Action	Responsibility
Capital Improvements		
OS-1	Continue to acquire key potential open space parcels. Potential parcels are identified in the Open Space and Recreation Plan. Acquisition should be reserved for important parcels that cannot be protected by other means. Acquisition Priorities: Land along inland and coastal water bodies and waterways to ensure access to and protection of these natural resources. Land which has scenic beauty or vistas. Land within the Scituate Reservoir watershed Land which is important from a historical or cultural standpoint Land which create or expands connection for open space corridors Land for City parks and recreation Land which is environmentally sensitive (i.e. wetlands)	City Council Planning Commission Conservation Commission Recreation Department Planning Department West Bay Land Trust Pawtuxet River Authority
OS-2	Develop programs to enhance the Historic Scenic Farm Route (HSFR), and promote it on a regional basis.	Recreation Department Planning Department Conservation Commission West Bay Land Trust
OS-3	Identify other scenic routes that are similar to the HSFR.	Conservation Commission Planning Department
OS-4	Improve existing public access to the waterfront	Recreation Department Pawtuxet River Authority Planning Department
OS-5	Expand greenways and watercourses that link other recreational resources.	Recreation Department Pawtuxet River Authority Planning Department
OS-6	Acquire or improve public lands for pocket parks for all ages in Cranston's urban neighborhoods.	City Council Planning Commission Conservation Commission Recreation Department Planning Department Public Works Department

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OS-7	Employ a variety of tools to preserve environmentally sensitive land and open space and improve public recreation Tools such as: Fee simple acquisition Conservation easements Purchase of development rights Transfer of development rights Tax incentive programs Land donations	City Council Planning Commission Conservation Commission Recreation Department Planning Department
Improvements to Existing Facilities		
OS-8	Continue to upgrade and expand recreational opportunities at existing sites to serve all segments of the population.	Recreation Department Planning Department City Council
OS-9	Ensure that recreational facilities allow access to people of all ages and are American with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant.	Recreation Department Building Department City Council
OS-10	Continue to improve existing access to the waterfront: Inventory all points of public ownership and access Improve access to riverfronts Improve access to Narragansett Bay.	City Council Planning Commission Conservation Commission Recreation Department Planning Department
OS-11	Transfer school recreation sites to the Recreation Department jurisdiction, as appropriate.	City Council Recreation Department School Department
Administrative and Management Actions		
OS-12	Continue to promote acquisition and management of open space through partnerships with local and regional non-profit agencies such as the West Bay Land Trust	City Council Planning Commission Conservation Commission Recreation Department Planning Department Land Trusts
OS-13	Adopt a River Corridor and Pond Access Overlay District that creates linear buffers and public access points along the major rivers and to the largest ponds. Give priority to protecting and improving the urbanized river corridors. Include controls within the subdivision regulations to protect and enhance water resources.	City Council Planning Commission Conservation Commission Recreation Department Planning Department



Introduction to the Circulation Element

The Circulation Element is instrumental in achieving several Comprehensive Plan goals:

- Access is needed to utilize land.
- Good circulation is needed to ease mobility and improve safety.
- Good access and circulation result in flexible land use options and improved quality of life.

However, given all the options to improve access and circulation and with limited funds, the challenge for the City is to decide where and how transportation dollars are best invested.

Key Challenges

The City is faced with some critical issues, regarding City streets and highways. The options to address these issues can be framed in a series of questions:

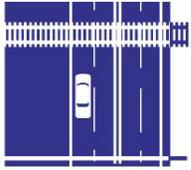
- Should traffic calming measures be installed on residential streets used for “cut-through” traffic?
- If smart growth, mixed use zoning is adopted, should off street parking requirements be modified in the districts to encourage the use of mass transit?
- Would a new commuter rail or transit/shuttle station in the AMTRAK Corridor improve conditions in Cranston?

- Can cross-city (i.e., east-west) traffic congestion be alleviated?
- Could RIPTA bus service expand to reduce traffic, and would people take it if available?
- How do we best manage the conflicts between pedestrian and vehicular traffic and what areas should pedestrian traffic be a priority? Do Cranston’s roads provide adequate and safe access?

Key Strategies

To maintain efficient circulation and improve safety as the City grows:

- Make It Safe - Reduce accidents with reconstruction, signs, lights, enforcement and other actions;
- Make It Safer - Install traffic calming in residential neighborhoods;
- Reduce Traffic - Promote use of alternate modes of transportation rather than driving;
- Improve Safety and Efficiency - Redesign arterial roads as transportation corridors and improve their safety and efficiency.



Part I. Summary and Accomplishments of the 1992 Plan

Introduction

The Circulation element of the 1992 Comprehensive Plan focused on identifying general traffic operations and specific problem and development issues. Recommendations mainly revolved around traffic congestion on east/west arterials, increase in traffic accidents, through traffic in residential neighborhoods, alternative transportation modes, proliferation of curb cuts on arterial routes, inadequacy and overspill of parking, and the western Cranston roadway network.

1992 Circulation Conditions

Cranston's major travel network orientation is north-south, dominated by I-95 and I-295. Despite the presence of Interstate highways, north-south arterial roadways, particularly Pontiac and Reservoir Avenues, become severely congested as relievers for I-95 and Route 10.

East-west travel on the network in the City is more difficult. Route 12 (Park Avenue) is the only route that completely traverses the City in an east-west direction, consisting of Park Avenue, part of Phenix Avenue, and Scituate Avenue. As a result, many drivers use neighborhood streets to travel in an east-west direction. Park Avenue in the east, however, is sluggish due to its two-lane configuration, numerous intersections, sporadic signaled intersections, and provision for continuous on-street parking.

Limited access highway Rt. 37 in the south provides a partial east-west movement in the eastern section of the City. Rt. 37, however, only connects to major north-south freeways and arterials (Routes I-295, I-95 and Pontiac and Reservoir Avenues); there are no local connections. Hope Road/Wilbur Avenue in the southwest and Route 14 (Plainfield Pike) in the north also provide partial east-west travel. Motorists with knowledge of local streets travel across the City by using primarily residential side streets, which have limited capacity.

Use of these streets by trucks connecting between arterials is an enforcement and signage problem.

In the 1992 Plan, strategies were developed to improve traffic operations and safety in each of the following areas of concern:

General Operation of Traffic

- Traffic Congestion on East-West Arterials – This two-part strategy included improvements to existing routes and development of alternative east-west routes.
- Increase in Traffic Accidents – In response to the increase in the number of traffic accidents, this strategy involved prioritizing locations and developing remedial measures for arterial corridors and intersections with high accident rates. The City, however, has not focused its efforts to resolve this issue. City police occasionally position a speed readout board on some arterials and heavily traveled residential streets.
- Develop Alternative Transportation Modes – As a means to relieve the burden on the roadway system, this strategy involved exploring alternative strategies, such as the use of abandoned rail lines and designation of bicycle routes.
- The Cranston Bike Path has been developed since 1992 on the former Washington Secondary Railroad corridor, roughly between Oaklawn Avenue and Cranston Street. This bike path begins in Cranston near the Amtrak corridor and the former Narragansett Brewery site, proceeds into Knightsville crossing Park Avenue and continues southwesterly through the City and beyond. Also, some streets have been designated as bike path routes with signs. Another bicycle route, the Cranston Bicycle Network, initially called the Cross

City Bicycle Corridor, was also developed over the past ten years. The route travels on streets across Cranston in basically two east/west routes that connect and loop in several points. It also connects riders to other parts of the state's bicycle routes. Most of it is signed for bicycles. Signs displaying "Cranston Bicycle Network" are displayed along its entire route. This route essentially links many other areas in Cranston that allow users to enjoy a wide range of recreational opportunities throughout Cranston and beyond into Warwick, West Warwick, and Coventry.

- RIPTA has installed passenger shelters at key boarding locations throughout the City as part of a system-wide deployment. Service has been reduced on the Elmwood–Auburn Route 20, which operates crosstown on Park Avenue between Rolfe Square and Wellington Avenue, a distance of less than one mile. Crosstown bus service is otherwise limited. Service is provided for the Garden City Shopping Center on the Washington/Arctic Route 13, but it terminates in the early evening and does not operate on Sunday or holidays. RIPTA considers Garden City to be a "park and ride" commuter location, but there is no formally designated parking site. Service on Route 22 Pontiac Avenue / Reservoir Avenue has been extended beyond its former Eden Park terminus to the CCRI campus in Warwick. This extension appears to have resulted in deterioration in schedule adherence during peak periods. Also, Route 22 experiences chronic overcrowding due to heavy passenger loads associated with the State Institutions/Howard Complex/Pastore Center. The City does not post "no parking" signs at bus stops, often forcing passengers to board/alight in the middle of the street.
- Rail Access – Planning by RIDOT for the proposed Providence-Westerly commuter rail service envisions use of the Amtrak main line passing through Cranston. RIDOT has initiated a commuter rail study which includes Cranston.

Development Control

- Proliferation of Curb Cuts on Arterial Routes – This strategy addresses traffic conflicts resulting from an excessive number of curb cuts for existing development on arterial routes.

- Inadequacy and Overspill of Parking – This strategy focuses on addressing the parking problems caused by commercial and other developments with inadequate on site parking, which lead to overspill to on-street parking. No viable strategy has been developed. Merchants want parking, including on street, as near to their premises as possible. The City has a long-standing policy that bans overnight parking on residential streets. Ticketing often prompts complaints from residents who lack off street parking, particularly in densely developed neighborhoods.
- There is a need to resolve the parking issue at the City Hall lot, which has limited parking spaces for both the adjacent East High School and several city departments. Possible solutions include reducing parking demand through ride sharing or adding a structure.
- Development Permitting Processes – This strategy is aimed at improving the effectiveness of zoning and site plan review to control the traffic and parking impacts of development. In response to the 1992 Plan, a site plan review ordinance has been enacted.

Inadequacies in the Transportation Network

- Western Cranston Roadway Network – This strategy addressed concerns with the roadway network in Western Cranston to meet existing and future traffic operations and safety needs. The 1992 Plan noted that substantial residential expansion was expected in this area.
- General deterioration in condition of City streets. The City has not provided sufficient funding to keep up with roadway resurfacing and crack sealing problems.

Specific Problems and Development Issues

- Specific Roadway Problems – This strategy identified a number of roadways with specific operational and safety issues. These included Park Avenue west of Reservoir Avenue; the Route 10 /Reservoir Avenue intersection (this intersection was reconfigured by RIDOT as part of the reconstruction of Reservoir Avenue); Bateman Avenue; Park Avenue/Park View Boulevard intersection (signal and lane striping changes were made at this location); Park

Avenue/Elmwood Avenue intersection (nothing done here); and others. RIDOT incorporated improvements to Route 10 / Park Avenue intersection as part of the reconstruction of this portion of Route 10. The project included landscaping at the terminus and along a portion of Route 10. The issues identified included general safety and operations as well as specific concerns, such as the need for traffic signals, turning lanes, poor sight lines, roadway striping, and roadway geometry.

- Access to Major Development Projects – This strategy focused on three development projects and their site access. The projects included the reuse of the Narragansett Brewery site, which provided a new access roadway system, including a connection to Route 10, when it was developed as a shopping and business center. The “Cornfields” site and the old Boys Training School were other project focuses, the latter featured improvements to Sockanosset Crossroad and New London Avenue.

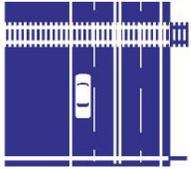
Table 8-1. Accomplishments of the 1992 Comprehensive Plan

Action	1992 Actions	Accomplishments and Changes
General Traffic Operations: Traffic Congestion on East – West Arterials		
C-1	Investigate proposals to improve safety and the flow of traffic on arterials.	This action was accomplished at the intersections of Sockanosset Cross Road and New London Turnpike, Park and Reservoir, Park and Rolfe and Pontiac, and along Furnace Hill. Improvements at Sockanosset Cross and Pontiac are under design.
C-2	Reduce or eliminate on-street parking on arterial roadways to improve roadway capacity.	On-street parking was reduced or eliminated at Rolfe Street and Park Avenue intersection, and in Pawtuxet Village through the Traffic Calming Project. Additional improvements are needed at other arterial intersections.
C-3	Enforce on-street parking restrictions.	The Police Department conducts code enforcement program through 4-hour police details to ticket illegal overnight parking on public streets. An area of particular concern is Edgewood near Johnson and Wales University where students park overnight on the streets. Police details have recently been substantially reduced and are no longer regularly scheduled because of fiscal issues.
C-4	Provide left turn lanes to reduce conflicts at intersections.	Left turn lanes were provided at Park and Reservoir, Sockanosset Crossroad and New London, and at Park and Rolfe. Other arterial intersections need to be identified for left turn lanes.
C-5	Identify and designate east-west routes for through traffic.	This action was not accomplished.
C-6	Prioritize problems at intersections and investigate improvements.	Intersections at Cranston and Garfield, Park and Reservoir, and at Park and Elmwood were prioritized.
C-7	Establish a program of intersection improvements.	Although this action was not accomplished as a program, improvements were made at Pontiac and Rolfe, Park and Rolfe, Park and Reservoir, and Sockanosset Crossroad and New London.
Increase in Traffic Accidents		
C-8	Prioritize accident problem locations and establish program of remedial measures.	Accident problem locations were prioritized through the RIDOT TIP at Park and Reservoir Avenues as well as at Natick and Furnace Hill.

C-9	Give priority to pedestrian safety improvements at key locations.	Priority was given for pedestrian safety improvements along the roads of Sockanosset, Cranston, Park and Rolfe, Garfield extension, and at Pawtuxet Village.
Through Traffic in Residential Neighborhoods		
C-10	Conduct analysis of local street sign controls in conjunction with east/west access studies.	This action was not accomplished.
C-11	Consider peak period restrictions on particular short cut routes.	This action was not accomplished
Alternative Transportation Modes		
C-12	Promote and support fixed-route bus services.	Bus stops were incorporated at two major developments at Cranston Parkade and Chapel View.
C-13	Make information on public transportation widely available.	This action was not accomplished.
C-14	Secure and preserve railroad rights-of-way for future transportation corridors.	RIDOT funded the Washington Secondary Track in 1993. The bike path was constructed in 1998. The Pontiac Secondary Track was purchased by RIDOT in 1990s. A bike path feasibility study was also performed.
C-15	Incorporate bicycle access in planning major developments.	Cranston Parkade development incorporates an internal bicycle path that connects to the Washington Secondary Bike Path. The City of Cranston established the Cross City Bicycle Corridor in 2001.
Proliferation of Curb Cuts on Arterial Route		
C-16	Restrict access to new development from major arterials.	Several developments in the past 12 years have been approved with fewer curb cuts than requested by the applicant and include Mulligan's Island, Texas Roadhouse, FW Webb, and Coastway Credit Union.
C-17	Regulate curb cuts through design standards.	This action has been partially regulated through the Site Plan Review process.
C-18	Provide left-turn lanes on arterial roadways where curb cuts to new development are unavoidable.	RIDOT has upgraded left turn lanes at several intersections including Park and Reservoir, New London and Sockanosset, Phenix and Atwood, Garfield and Cranston Parkade, Sockanosset at Chapel View, Reservoir from Park to Providence city line, and Rolfe and Park.
C-19	Encourage collector driveways to limit the number of access points.	Collector driveways were used at Chapel Hill, Natick Hill, and the Phenix Rising developments.
Inadequacy and Overspill of Parking		
C-20	Require compliance with parking standards in Zoning Ordinance and discourage on-street parking.	This is being addressed through Site Plan Review and zoning review.

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C-21	Encourage off-street parking at existing developments.	This action was never accomplished.
C-22	Encourage shared parking.	Shared parking was implemented for Chapel View, Coastway office building, CVS, and for the Post Office at Rolfe Street.
C-23	Require provision of landscaping to delineate parking areas and provide buffers.	This action was implemented through the Site Plan Review Ordinance that was passed in 1998. Over 100 applications were reviewed in 6 years.
C-24	Review and update parking standards in Zoning Ordinances.	This action was not accomplished.
C-25	Restrict on-street parking where feasible.	The Park Avenue and Rolfe Street intersection reconstruction restricted on-street parking. It was also restricted at Pawtuxet Village.
Western Cranston Roadway Network		
C-26	Investigate appropriate improvements to eliminate safety and operational problems.	A right-turn lane was added at the intersection of Comstock Parkway and Scituate Avenue. The Phenix Avenue and Natick Road intersection was reconstructed. The bend on Hope Road at the Briggs Farm Recreational Field was reconstructed.
C-27	Investigate improvements to roadway links to support increase in development without encouraging additional development. Focus should be on: (1) existing deficiencies on Scituate Avenue (Route 12); and (2) link to Route 37 corridor.	A right-turn lane was added at the intersection of Comstock Parkway and Scituate Avenue. The Phenix Avenue and Natick Road intersection was reconstructed.
C-28	Undertake detailed study and program of improvements for Pippin Orchard Road/ Hope Road / Phenix Avenue / Wilbur Avenue / Natick Avenue corridor.	A detailed study of Phenix Avenue (east of Hope Road intersection) and Natick Avenue was partially completed.
C-29	Encourage additional roadway links between Olney Arnold Road and Pippin Orchard Road, and between Natick Avenue and Phenix Avenue.	Two residential developments, Orchard Estates and Birchwood Estates, were approved with road stubs for future connections.
C-30	Plan access to new development to limit access points to collector and arterial roadways. Restrict local streets connections to collector roads where possible.	This action was implemented in two subdivisions: Natick Hill and Phenix Rising.
C-31	Establish a program of improvements to specific roadway segments and intersections based on identified problems.	A new intersection was constructed at Phenix and Natick roads. Reconstructed Olney Arnold Road. Reconstructed the curve on Hope Road at the Briggs Farm Recreational Field.



Part II. Current Conditions and Issues

Introduction

Despite the intersection improvements implemented since 1992, the major transportation issues identified in the 1992 Comprehensive Plan still persist. Neither the roadway network nor the bus transit routes and service have changed significantly.

The lack of east-west crosstown routes still causes congestion on Park Avenue and promotes cut through traffic in residential neighborhoods. Although alternate east-west routes recommended in the 1992 Plan have not been implemented, residents would likely resist any attempts to route traffic through local neighborhood streets. Park Avenue to Scituate Avenue continues to serve as the only east-west roadway link that traverses the entire city. Methods to improve traffic flow on Park Avenue, such as removing on-street parking and providing off-street parking, have continually been resisted by merchants. They believe that business would be hurt if customers could not park on the street in front of, or near, their businesses. Accidents continue to occur on Park Avenue, particularly at the intersections with Reservoir Avenue, Elmwood Avenue, and Rolfe Square.

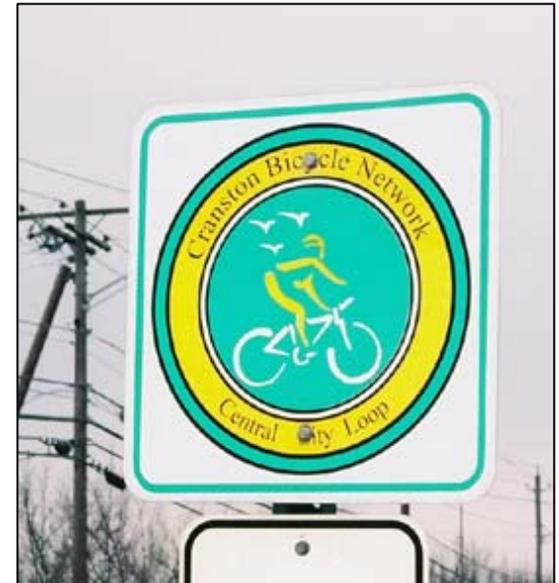
The number of traffic accidents along Park Avenue is significant and increasing. Between January 1, 2002 and December 31, 2004, there were 1,772 accidents on Park Avenue, according to Police Department records. Of those 1,181 accidents (or 67 percent) were at intersections. The highest incidences were at Reservoir Avenue (211) and Elmwood Avenue (113). Moreover, the number of accident increased 34 percent from 762 during the period January 1, 2002 to March 31, 2003 to 1,021 between April 1, 2003 and December 31, 2004.

The major cause of these traffic accidents is poor driving habits rather than intersection design and signal timing, according to the

Police Department. For example, many drivers do not stop at State road intersections, such as Reservoir Avenue, where right turn on red is allowed. On many City streets, right turn on red is not allowed and signed accordingly. In addition many drivers try to “beat the light” when making left turns. A major driver education program is needed, according to the Police Department. Greater traffic enforcement of moving violations would also help reduce accidents.

North-south routes continue to provide good access between local and arterial streets to the Interstate Highway system, Providence, and points to the south. Two major Interstate highways carry traffic through and to/from Cranston. In 2003, I-95 between Routes 10 and 37 carried 187,900 vehicles (Average 24-hour Daily Traffic, ADT) and I-295 between Routes 12 and 14 had 73,400 ADT. State Route 37, a relatively short east-west route in southern Cranston, links the two Interstates and had 41,400 ADT.

Since 1992, the Pastore Center/Garden City area experienced increased traffic due to its prime location near major roads and expansion of State facilities and commercial



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development. For example, State Route 2 (New London Avenue) provides access to

the Pastore Center and had 22,900 ADT in 2000. Farther north, Route 2 becomes Reservoir Avenue and provides access to Garden City; it carried 29,300 vehicles ADT in 2000. Increased traffic is expected due to redevelopment of the adjacent Boys Training School site into a mixed-use development called Chapel View. Garden City continues to attract shoppers from throughout Rhode Island due to its high quality merchandise and open air shopping experience.

Transportation services continue to be provided by the Rhode Island Department of Transportation, RIDOT (Interstate and State Highways), the Rhode Island Public Transportation Authority, RIPTA (bus transit), and the City of Cranston Department of Public Works, DPW (signs, signals and City street maintenance).

Circulation Issues

The primary circulation issues for the Comprehensive Plan follow:

- Should traffic calming be instituted on certain residential streets used as “cut throughs?”
- How should crosstown (i.e., east-west) traffic congestion be alleviated?

If the village-center zoning district is adopted, should fewer cars be allowed to park in the district to increase the potential for transit use in higher density areas?

- Should Cranston study alternatives for a commuter rail or rail transit shuttle station in the AMTRAK Corridor?

Other Circulation issues include the following:

- Where pedestrian amenities should be provided?
- Does Cranston need more RIPTA bus service?
- Does Cranston’s roadway network provide adequate and safe access and mobility?
- What can be done to make Cranston’s arterial roads more aesthetically pleasing?

Improved access and mobility require a system of roadways including expressways, major and minor arterials, collector streets, and local streets. All roads except expressways provide both access to property and travel mobility. A logical functional hierarchy of streets is needed: high mobility and low access for arterials, balanced mobility and access for collectors, and high access for local streets.

The Park Avenue Example

Park Avenue is considered an arterial street. It provides, along with the Scituate Avenue (State Route 12) connection, the City’s only east-west link. Park Avenue currently provides high access and low mobility, the reverse of its supposed function. On-street parking on Park Avenue impedes mobility, but provides access to merchants. Since Park Avenue functions better for access than mobility, should it be downgraded from an arterial to a special commercial street and become a candidate for major improvements for pedestrians? Or should on-street parking be removed and replaced with off-street parking lots to increase mobility?

Reservoir Avenue

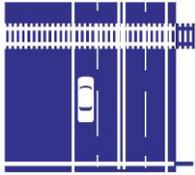


Key Management Issues

Cranston must compete for State and Federal transportation funds with other communities as part of the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for State roadway improvements, bikeways and similar transportation needs. The TIP projects implemented in 2003-2004 for Cranston are shown in the Appendix.

In order to maximize TIP funding, several management issues will need to be addressed:

- What kind of a systematic process should be implemented to identify projects?
- What would the purpose and need be for each project and what criteria should be developed to establish a priority list that meets the circulation needs of the city?
- The City of Cranston has traditionally been short on funds for maintaining City streets, signs, sidewalks and signals. Should a separate maintenance budget be established which would allocate funds based on needs and priorities?



Part III. Strategies and Actions

This section identifies actions that will help resolve existing and potential future issues. Many of these actions, which are based on the 1992 Comprehensive Plan and have not been implemented, are still valid. New recommendations are also included such as determination of the primary function of a street (mobility or access), rail transit, and traffic calming. A summary of the proposed actions, time frames, and responsibilities for the Circulation element is provided at the end of this section.

General Traffic Operations

Improve Mobility on Arterials

Cranston has a significant need to improve mobility, especially on east-west streets, since there are so few of them. Given the cost of construction of new streets, it is prudent for Cranston to maximize the utility of its roadway assets. Alternate candidates for east-west routes were identified in the 1992 Plan. These need to be revisited by the City to determine their primary function (mobility or access) and then determine if any should be implemented. The primary candidates for improvement remain Park Avenue and Scituate Avenue. These two roadways are designated State Route 12 beginning at U.S. Route 1A - State Route 117 in eastern Cranston and ending in the City at the Scituate town line. Accordingly, improvements to Route 12 are eligible for funding through RIDOT. A systematic mobility improvement program should include recommendations C-1 through C-7 in the table at the end of this section.

Implement an Accident Reduction Program

The City should implement the still valid recommendation in the 1992 Plan to “prioritize accident problem locations based on detailed

investigation of accident records”. The roadway corridors with the highest accidents in 1992 were State Routes 12, 2, and 5, and Pontiac Avenue. Accident mitigation programs would be eligible for State funding through RIDOT for the State routes. Intersections of major cross streets that need channelization and signalization improvements for vehicular traffic and pedestrian crossings are particularly important areas of concern. Dedicated left turn movements in the center of the wider commercial arterials and at major intersections are important. See the Recommendations C-4, C-8, and C-9 in the table following this section.

Implement Traffic Calming in Residential Neighborhoods.

Traffic calming is a set of physical and programmatic measures to mitigate the negative effects of vehicular travel and improve the environment for pedestrians and bicyclists. These measures can include police enforcement and education programs, but more commonly, the construction of speed bumps, narrowed travel lanes, and widened sidewalks, especially at intersections.

Objectives of traffic calming include the following:

- To encourage participation of the affected public in the traffic calming process;
- To reduce vehicular speeds;
- To create pleasant conditions for motorists and pedestrians;
- To improve the environment and livability of neighborhoods;
- To improve real and perceived safety for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- To discourage the use of residential streets as cut-through streets.

Traffic calming devices include a wide variety of measures: bike lanes, bump-outs, neck-downs and chokers (i.e., sidewalk extensions); center islands; chicanes/lateral shifts (e.g., widening sidewalks on alternating sides of the street creating a curved street); closures (cul de sacs); diverters (barriers to certain movements); education; forced turn lanes; median barriers; police enforcement; realigned intersections; roundabouts (small traffic circles); speed humps; speed tables, textured pavement and raised crossings; and traffic circles.

Individual traffic calming measures for specific residential streets have not been recommended in this Comprehensive Planning Update. Instead, a supplementary planning process is recommended to include the impacted neighborhoods. Traffic calming measures should only be implemented when the impacts of such measures on neighboring residential streets and arterial streets are fully recognized and accommodated. The function of the street, either mobility or access, should be the principal consideration for application of a measure.

For more information on traffic calming techniques, the reader may visit <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/tcalm/>. This Federal Highway Administration website provides a wealth of information about traffic calming, including the websites of cities throughout the U.S. that have successfully implemented such measures.

Promote Alternate Modes of Transportation

Alternate modes of transportation still are underutilized in Cranston despite large commuting and transit dependent populations. While the City is served by approximately seven north-south RIPTA bus routes, they are not heavily used for commuting. Commuting residents prefer driving rather than taking the bus. In 2000, nearly 85 percent of Cranston residents drove alone to work, according to U.S. Census data. Over half of the approximately 36,000 Cranston residents who commuted worked in Cranston or Providence. In addition, over 2,800 occupied housing units (approximately 9 percent) in Cranston did not have a vehicle available for transportation. This significant transit dependent population may not be served by existing bus routes. Transit use needs to be actively promoted by RIPTA and the City to reduce the dependence on the automobile.

The Cranston Bike Path has been built on an abandoned railroad right of way providing an alternate means of transport. This bike path, part of a longer bikeway that serves the West Bay area of Rhode Island, is largely used for recreation in Cranston, not commuting. It could be made more attractive for commuting if appropriate safe links to schools, shopping areas and employment concentrations were developed. Maintenance of the bike path is an ongoing problem and should be a line item in the recommended Maintenance Fund to be administered by the DPW (See Public Facilities and Services section).

Another option for alternative transportation is to study the feasibility of adding a rail station in the city along the AMTRAK corridor. There has been considerable interest by the State in using the AMTRAK corridor for regional rail transit as explained in the following studies.

RIDOT conducted the South County Commuter Rail Study in 1995 to determine the feasibility of extending the current MBTA train service between Boston and Providence to Westerly. Recommended were stations in adjacent Warwick at T.F. Green Airport and in North Kingstown at Wickford Junction, the latter projected to attract far more riders than all the other stations considered combined. A Cranston station was not considered in the study.

A Federal Environmental Assessment was prepared in the late 1990s for the Warwick Station, including a people mover connection between the station and the airport terminal. An option for a separate train shuttle between Warwick and Providence was also identified in the study.

In a separate study that was conducted in 1997 and updated in 2001, a commuter rail station in West Davisville was proposed in the Master Plan for Quonset Davisville Port and Commerce Park by the Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation (RIEDC).

None of these projects have been advanced, however, due to the lack of continued political pressure to secure funding. The City should revive interest in using the untapped potential of the AMTRAK corridor for both local and regional travel. In his State of the State address in January 2005, the Governor promoted extending the commuter rail south of Providence to Westerly and to “break ground” for stations at the airport in Warwick and Wickford Junction in North Kingstown. The City should capitalize on this political support.

RIDOT should initiate a station feasibility study, in coordination with the City. Included should be a transit oriented development (TOD) planning effort to increase ridership potentials for a Cranston Station. A well-located station in Cranston could stimulate economic development near the station, if land is available, if market demand exists and if strong public policy promotes it. There are excellent examples throughout the country where TOD combined with transit stations yielded dramatic ridership and development results. Examples include:

- Arlington, VA (five stations along a Washington Area Metropolitan Transit Authority (WMATA) heavy rail line;
- Bethesda and Silver Spring, MD stations along a WMATA heavy rail line;
- Dallas, TX (Mockingbird Station on the Dallas Area Rapid Transit (light rail transit) line; and
- Portland, OR (many stations along Tri Met light rail transit lines. In Portland, TOD planning is integral to station siting.

Control Curb Cuts on Arterial Routes

Proliferation of curb cuts on major arterials is a safety issue because of the cumulative increase in turning movements in and out of through traffic lanes. Reservoir Avenue is a prime example of how adjacent commercial development access to and from an arterial has created traffic and safety issues. Often, there are too many curb cuts serving a single new development and access to new adjacent development should be restricted by consolidating curb cuts. The design of curb cuts can mitigate some negative aspects such as locating access points opposite a street intersection and consolidating ingress and egress into a single well-signed location. While a left turn lane need not be provided for every curb cut, left turn lanes from arterial streets should be provided to access properties where curb cuts are unavoidable. The construction of collector driveways or a service road will limit the number of access points. These design standards should be included in the City's Zoning Code, used in the City's commercial Site Plan Review process.

Parking

Parking continues to be an issue in eastern Cranston. The lack of off-street parking is evident in commercial areas like Park Avenue, especially near City Hall and Cranston High School East, as well as in residential areas such as the Edgewood neighborhood adjacent to Johnson and Wales University at Fields Point. Incentives are needed to create commercial parking lots. There needs to be a concerted effort to address these parking problems. For example, the Town of Brookline, Massachusetts developed public parking areas behind commercial areas such as Coolidge Corner (Brookline's downtown). Merchants located along Park Avenue should consider forming associations to provide shared off street parking. Shared parking behind several businesses can provide much needed spaces. In addition, the City should consider building a parking structure behind City Hall to serve government functions, Cranston High School East, the new Park Avenue entertainment complex and Rolfe Square area businesses. The idea of compact parking structures should also be considered in Knightsville.

Western Cranston Roadways

Western Cranston is a growth area where residential subdivisions and low density single-family housing predominate. The major roadway system is not well defined with Scituate Avenue (Route 12) and Plainfield Pike (Route 14) providing the major east-west travel corridors through the area. The Hope Road-Phenix Avenue link provides a southwest-northeast travel route and Pippin Orchard Road / Hope Road provides the only north-south route. The remainders of the roads serve residential subdivisions. The 1992 Comprehensive Plan indicated several possible extensions and connections but none have been constructed. The issue is how to provide for efficient travel in this area without stimulating growth.

Park Avenue Study

Park Avenue is the City's traditional commercial street, particularly between I-95 and Knightsville. It provides a great deal of access to adjacent businesses but does not provide adequate mobility. It has two lanes with two-way traffic, and circulation is constricted by on-only "Main Street", Park Avenue should be visually improved with signage controls, landscaping, new sidewalks, and decorative lighting.

Table 8-3. Summary of the Proposed Actions and Responsibilities for this Plan

	Actions	Responsibility
General Traffic Operations: Traffic Congestion on East – West Arterials		
C-1	Investigate proposals to improve safety and the flow of traffic on arterials.	Public Works Department
C-2	Reduce or eliminate on-street parking on arterial roadways to improve roadway capacity.	Public Works Department
C-3	Enforce on-street parking restrictions.	Police Department
C-4	Provide left turn lanes to reduce conflicts at intersections where appropriate	Public Works Department
C-5	Identify potential east-west routes for through traffic.	Planning Department Public Works Department
C-6	Prioritize problem intersections and investigate improvements	Public Works Department
C-7	Establish a program of intersection improvements.	Public Works Department
Traffic Accidents		
C-8	Identify high accident locations and establish program of remedial measures.	Public Works Department Police Department
C-9	Give priority to pedestrian safety improvements at key locations.	Planning Department Public Works Department
Through Traffic in Residential Neighborhoods		
C-10	Conduct analysis of local street sign controls in conjunction with east/west access studies.	Public Works Department
C-11	Consider peak period restrictions on particular short cut routes.	Planning Department Public Works Department
Alternative Transportation Modes		
C-12	Promote and support fixed-route bus services.	Planning Department RIPTA
C-13	Make information on public transportation available.	Planning Department RIPTA
C-14	Secure and preserve railroad rights-of-way for future transportation corridors.	Planning Department Public Works Department RIDOT

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C-15	Incorporate bicycle access in major developments. <i>Related Action:</i> LU-31	Planning Department
Curb Cuts on Arterial Route		
C-16	Restrict access from new development to major arterials.	Planning Department
C-17	Regulate curb cuts through design standards.	Planning Department
C-18	Provide left-turn lanes on arterial roadways where curb cuts to new development are unavoidable.	Planning Department
C-19	Encourage collector driveways to limit the number of access points.	Planning Department Public Works Department
Parking		
C-20	Require compliance with parking standards in Zoning Ordinance and discourage on-street parking.	Planning Department Police Department
C-21	Encourage off-street parking at existing developments.	Planning Department Police Department City Council
C-22	Encourage shared parking.	Planning Department
C-23	Require provision of landscaping to delineate parking areas and provide buffers. <i>Related Action:</i> LU-12, LU-13	Planning Department
C-24	Review and update parking standards in Zoning Ordinances.	Planning Department Planning Commission City Council
C-25	Restrict on-street parking where feasible.	Planning Department City Council Public Works Department
Western Cranston Roadway Network		
C-26	Identify roadway improvements to eliminate safety and operational problems.	Planning Department Public Works Department
C-27	Identify improvements to roadway links to safely accommodate increased traffic volume. Focus should be on: (1) existing deficiencies on Scituate Avenue (Route 12), (2) link to Route 37 corridor)	Planning Department Public Works Department
C-28	Undertake detailed study and program of improvements for the Pippin Orchard Road/ Hope Road / Phenix Avenue / Wilbur Avenue / Natick Avenue corridor.	Planning Department Planning Commission Public Works Department City Council RIDOT

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C-29	Encourage roadway links between the Hill Side Farm Neighborhood and Pippin Orchard Road.	Planning Department Planning Commission Public Works Department City Council
C-30	Limit access points from new development to collector and arterial roadways. Restrict local streets connections to collector roads where possible.	Planning Department Public Works Department
C-31	Establish a program of improvements for specific roadway segments and intersections based on identified problems.	Planning Department Planning Commission City Council Public Works Department RIDOT
Park Avenue Study		
C-32	Investigate improvements to eliminate safety and operational problems.	Planning Department Police Department Public Works Department
C-33	Divide study into segments to reflect the differing traffic situations and adjacent land uses such as: Wellington Avenue to Pontiac Avenue (including Rolfe Square); Pontiac Ave. to Reservoir Avenue (including City Hall and East High School); Reservoir Ave. to Gansett Ave.; Gansett Ave. to Cranston Street; and Phenix Ave. to Atwood Ave. Some of these segments may be combined.	Planning Department Planning Commission City Council RIDOT Public Works Department
C-34	Remove on-street parking where appropriate	Planning Department Public Works Department City Council
C-35	Identify locations for off street parking or shared parking arrangements between cooperating and abutting businesses that have off street parking.	Planning Department
C-36	Identify street beautification improvements such as sign design controls, street trees and other landscaping, public art, new sidewalks, trash receptacles, lighting and benches.	Planning Department Public Works Department
C-37	Create special Park Avenue Study Advisory Committee representing merchants, City Hall, Cranston High School East and other major affected parties to advise on recommendations and monitor implementation.	Planning Department
Actions Requiring Further Study		
C-38	Investigate a commuter rail station and support of a Transit Oriented Development (TOD) in the Elmwood/ Wellington Avenues area.	Planning Department RIDOT Amtrak



Implementation Program

Introduction

The Comprehensive Plan's Implementation Element maps a way to accomplish the goals and objectives by listing the specific actions, approximating the time for completion, and identifying which office or offices should take the responsibility for action. Under this Plan's recommendations, there is a combination of funds, staffing, labor, and coordination between agencies and groups that will be needed.

The following pages (Tables 9-1 to 9-8) list the recommendations. Some of these actions are carried over from the 1992 Comprehensive Plan because they are still applicable. The table is organized according to the eight elements and lists each Action, Time Frame, and Responsibility, as described below.

Action	Lists the actions necessary to achieve the vision and goals of the Plan.
Time Frame	Establishes the time in years that the action will be implemented. Three time frames are used: short-term (within 1 year); medium-term (within 2-3 years); longer-term (within 4-5 years).
Responsibility	Assigns the elected or appointed body, agency, or groups principally responsible to initiate and monitor completion of the action.



Cranston School Department Administration, Briggs Building on Park Avenue

Table 9-1. Summary of the Proposed Actions, Time Frames, and Responsibilities for this Plan

LAND USE (LU)

	Action	Time Frame			Responsibility
		Short (within 1 yr)	Medium (2-3 yrs)	Longer (4-5 yrs)	
Growth Management in Western Cranston					
LU-1	Improve cluster/conservation subdivisions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise existing cluster (Residential Planned District) regulations to require the use of this land development technique. • Mandate that new residential development in western Cranston conforms to conservation subdivision standards. • Use these regulatory approaches in concert with conservation easements and tax assessments tools to preserve valuable natural and historic resources. • Within the application of these standards, encourage landscape diversity that creates an identity and sense of place. 				City Council Planning Commission Planning Department Public Works Department
LU-2	Control subdivision impacts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to amend subdivision regulations to promote land development patterns that minimize site disturbance, minimize visual impacts, and retain rural features and community character. • Consider Low Impact Development standards to reduce the impacts of land development and stormwater runoff. 				(Ongoing) City Council Planning Commission Planning Department
LU-3	Maintain continuity of access: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to identify areas that have special natural resources for protection through conservation design subdivisions, in order to ensure the preservation of major contiguous parcels and corridors. • Secure authorization to allow public access on trails in private, dedicated open space. 				(Ongoing) City Council Planning Commission Planning Department

9. IMPLEMENTATION

LU-4	<p>Establish a compact Village Center:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designate an area for development of a compact village center to serve Western Cranston, and establish standards and criteria for development within this district. • Prepare criteria and standards for development within and outside the village center based on the Transfer of Development Rights. • Include in the criteria standards for locations, character of development, densities, implementation mechanisms, review and approval procedures, provisions for public civic and community facilities and uses, maximization of utility and public infrastructure, and standards for public ways, pedestrian access, bicycle access and the interconnection of ways. 				<p>City Council Planning Commission Planning Department</p>
LU-5	<p>Mandate cluster/conservation subdivisions: Increase minimum lot area outside the Village Center, unless developed as cluster/conservation subdivisions.</p>				<p>City Council Planning Commission Planning Department</p>
LU-6	<p>Adopt Transfer of Development Rights (TDR):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider a TDR as an option to increase density in the village center while reducing density outside the village center. 				<p>City Council Planning Commission Planning Department</p>
LU-7	<p>Use conservation restrictions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider conservation restriction or less-than-fee acquisition programs to limit the ultimate development potential of valuable parcels, in return for reductions in tax liabilities. 			(Ongoing)	<p>City Council Planning Commission Planning Department</p>
LU-8	<p>Use utilities to support smart growth: Adopt a utilities services program that supports the smart growth, conservation subdivision and neighborhood services plans. Manage utility expansion in accordance with the Statewide Planning, Land Use 2025, and the Urban Services Boundary represented therein.</p>				<p>City Council Planning Commission Planning Department Public Works Department</p>
LU-9	<p>Preserve local and regional heritage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a heritage preservation program to preserve scenic landscapes and view sheds. • Make the Historic Farm Loop a special focus of the heritage program. • Implement a Scenic Road Overlay Zone to protect scenic aspects of the Historic Farm Loop. 				<p>Planning Commission Planning Department City Council Conservation Commission</p>

9. IMPLEMENTATION

LU-10	<p>Preserve agricultural lands:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement an Agricultural Preservation Program. • Identify specific parcels for preservation and work with the land owners to explore purchase of fee simple or development rights, and state tax programs to accomplish the preservation. • Support local farm products and alternative farm products to help ensure the continued viability of farming. 				<p>City Council Planning Commission Planning Department West Bay Land Trust Conservation Commission</p>
LU-11	<p>Site new public facilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site a new public facilities and services center to support residents and businesses in the western portion of the City. 				<p>Planning Department Public Works Department</p>
Commercial Development					
LU-12	<p>Establish design standards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to improve site design standards to increase the quality of new development and use new 'smart growth' zoning techniques to assist these approaches. • Adopt architectural design standards to increase the aesthetic quality of new commercial development or redevelopment. 				<p>Planning Commission Planning Department City Council</p>
LU-13	<p>Establish streetscape design standards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance streetscape design guidelines to apply to public construction projects and private construction projects that include public rights of way improvements. 				<p>Planning Commission Planning Department</p>
LU-14	<p>Review development impacts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update development impact fees to ensure that new development contributes adequately and proportionately to the costs of improvements required by such development 				<p>Planning Commission Planning Department City Council</p>
LU-15	<p>Corridor studies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and prioritize commercial corridor segments for study, in order to provide guidance for appropriate regulatory changes and City economic development efforts such as marketing and financing programs. Identify specific development objectives, preferred commercial uses, circulation and safety improvements, and potential linkages among parcels. 				<p>Planning Commission Planning Department</p>

9. IMPLEMENTATION

LU-16	<p>Revise Plainfield Pike zoning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revise zoning districts along Plainfield Pike to eliminate incompatible land uses and consolidate the industrial zoning of the area. 				<p>City Council Planning Commission Planning Department</p>
New Development and Redevelopment Projects					
LU-17	<p>Apply sustainability policies to new projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include sustainability in drafting new regulations and review of new development projects. Adopt the Urban Services Boundary of the Statewide Land Use Plan 2025 as a guide to land use and development. 				<p>City Council Planning Commission Economic Development Dept. Planning Department</p>
LU-18	<p>Adopt Mixed Use/ TOD Plans:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore the feasibility of mixed-use development plans for a village center project on public and private land at Phenix Avenue and Route 37 as suggested by conceptual illustration. Investigate the feasibility of a mixed-use development plan for TOD development on industrial land between Elmwood and Wellington Avenue as suggested by conceptual illustration. 				<p>City Council Planning Commission Economic Development Dept. Planning Department</p>
LU-19	<p>Establish a neighborhood village center in Western Cranston:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Propose a neighborhood village center development plan for a location at Pippin Orchard Road and Scituate Avenue, or Phenix Terrace using smart growth principles. 				<p>City Council Planning Commission Economic Development Dept. Planning Department</p>
Fields Point Redevelopment					
LU-20	<p>Involve City in the (Base Relocation and Closure) BRAC process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage in the BRAC process to decide on the appropriate reuse of the Reserve Center at Fields point, which may be closed and available for economic development. Contact (Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation) RIEDC to initiate participation in the redevelopment decision-making process. 				<p>Mayor City Council Planning Commission Planning Department</p>
Former Trolley Barn Site Redevelopment					
LU-21	<p>Continue efforts to implement a mixed-use development at the location of the former Trolley Barn site.</p>				<p>Mayor City Council Planning Commission Planning Department</p>

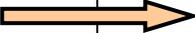
Pastore Center					
LU-22	Negotiate with the State to allow private investment in the Pastore Center: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Site this development on the edges to buffer the site and improve economic development opportunities in the City. 				Mayor Planning Department Economic Development Dept.
LU-23	Create a Government Institutional Zoning District: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply the district to the developed area of the Pastore complex, in place of the existing Open Space (S-1) district. 				City Council Planning Commission Planning Department
Land Use and Zoning Consistency					
LU-24	Amend Zoning Map and Zoning Ordinance to eliminate major inconsistencies between land use and zoning in the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Warwick Avenue Elmwood Avenue Park Avenue Cranston Street Additional sections of Atwood Avenue Route 2 and Bald Hill Road Norwood Avenue 				City Council Planning Commission Planning Department
LU-25	Adopt Smart Growth principles: Adopt smart growth policies after a series of public meetings geared to determine the appropriate standards for the City.				City Council Planning Commission Planning Department
LU-26	Protect and stabilize existing residential neighborhoods: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce minimum lot size required for open space zoning so that smaller parcels can be protected. Improve roadway conditions Make the zoning conform to existing uses.				City Council Planning Commission Planning Department
LU-27	Create bicycle and pedestrian links: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve connections between the extensive supply of historic, open space, and natural resources. Extend bicycle facilities to Western Cranston. 				Mayor City Council Planning Department Planning Commission RIDOT

HOUSING (HA)

	Action	Time Frame			Responsibility
		Short (within 1 yr)	Medium (2-3 yrs)	Longer (4-5 yrs)	
Adopt Inclusionary and Smart Growth Standards					
HA-1	Enact inclusionary zoning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase affordable housing in most new subdivisions and development projects through incentives and bonuses Require a proportion of units as affordable housing (as defined by State regulations) in each new housing project over ten units in size. 				City Council Planning Commission Planning Department Housing Task Force
HA-2	Set a short-term, yearly goal of 30 new affordable housing units per year: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce 150 units during this next five-year period. 				City Council Planning Commission Planning Department Housing Task Force
HA-3	Encourage housing that is mixed into commercial projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet the Smart Growth goals of this Comprehensive Plan and the State. 				City Council Planning Commission Planning Department
Conserve Resources in Future Subdivisions					
HA-4	Require conservation-type subdivisions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply to remaining undeveloped land to conserve natural resources, protect public resources, improve property values, and improve accessibility. 				City Council Planning Commission Planning Department Conservation Commission
Conserve Existing Housing Resources					
HA-5	Enable two and three-family unit dwellings to be modified, maintained and improved within the existing neighborhoods: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce burden of zoning and building regulations. 				City Council Planning Commission Planning Department Building and Zoning Dept
HA-6	Review zoning in existing residential neighborhoods to ensure the zoning matches, as closely as possible, what has already been built: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revise in terms of dimensions and unit types, unless site constraints or specific needs determine otherwise. 				City Council Planning Commission Planning Department Housing Task Force

Establish an Affordable Housing Task Force					
HA-7	<p>Create a Housing Task Force:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Request the Task Force research, advocate, and coordinate affordable housing programs. 				<p>Mayor City Council Planning Commission Community Development Office Planning Department</p>
HA-8	<p>Create a Housing Trust Fund:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use fund to generate revenue for local housing assistance program initiatives. 				<p>Mayor City Council Community Development Office Housing Task Force</p>
Initiate Public Education and Outreach					
HA-9	<p>Sponsor a citywide public education program on affordability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask the Housing Task Force to organize program. Seek sponsorship by the administration. 				<p>Mayor Housing Task Force Community Development Office</p>
Provide Density Bonuses					
HA-10	<p>Provide density bonuses for cluster developments that incorporate a specified proportion of affordable housing.</p>				<p>City Council Planning Commission Planning Department</p>
Conserving Existing Housing Resources					
HA-11	<p>Create a CDBG grant program to provide funding for correction of serious code violations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Address immediate health and safety concerns Provide rehabilitation loans for rental housing which is affordable to lower income families. 				<p>Community Development Office Housing Inspections Housing Task Force</p>
HA-12	<p>Create a housing acquisition, rehabilitation and resale program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Purchase vacant and deteriorated structures, renovate them and offer them for resale to lower income families. 				<p>Community Development Office Housing Task Force Housing Inspections</p>
HA-13	<p>Enact regulations that require that all development proposals, which envision relocation of lower income families, provide housing allowances and relocation payments equal to or greater than the levels required by the U.S. Housing and Urban Development agency.</p>				<p>City Council Community Development Office Planning Commission Planning Department</p>

9. IMPLEMENTATION

HA-14	Enact a neighborhood preservation overlay district ordinance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preserve the quality and character of the built environment in selected areas throughout Cranston. 				City Council Planning Commission Planning Department
HA-15	Adopt an adaptive re-use ordinance to facilitate the creation of affordable housing.				City Council Community Development Office Housing Task Force Planning Commission Planning Department
HA-16	Develop an inventory of vacant city owned, tax title lots which would be suitable for development.		(Ongoing)		City Council Community Development Office Housing Task Force Planning Commission Planning Department
HA-17	Partner with non-profit affordable housing organizations to create affordable housing.			(Ongoing)	City Council Community Development Office Housing Task Force Planning Commission Planning Department
Coordinate Programs					
HA-18	Use the Comprehensive Housing Assistance Strategy as an opportunity to coordinate various City housing programs by recognizing the CHAS in the Comprehensive Plan.				Housing Task Force Housing Authority Planning Department
HA-19	Enact land use regulations, which encourage alternative group living arrangements, especially for elderly and handicapped.				City Council Community Development Office Housing Task Force Planning Commission Planning Department

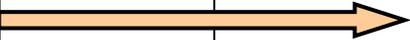
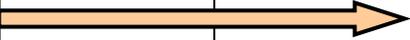
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (ED)

	Action	Time Frame			Responsibility
		Short (within 1 yr)	Medium (2-3 yrs)	Longer (4-5 yrs)	
Matching Jobs and Workers					
ED-1	Establish a marketing program: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact local and regional chambers of commerce Coordinate with RIEDC Offer participation of City staff and use of City funds. 				Economic Development Dept.
ED-2	Continue support of the Urban Ventures program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use program to encourage new small businesses. 				Economic Development Dept.
ED-3	Create programs through institutions to match job seekers and businesses. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek cooperation with educational institutions in the area; URI, RIC, CCRI, Johnson & Wales and other area colleges. 				Economic Development Dept.
Preserving and Increasing Employment Opportunities					
ED-4	Adopt a competitive ranking system for Revolving Loan Fund: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Also provide other city assistance Encourage diversification in the local economy. 				Economic Development Dept.
ED-5	Identify growth industries with national markets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compliment Cranston's existing economic base Promote the location of specific businesses in the City through a targeted marketing effort. 				Economic Development Dept.
ED-6	Continue to develop and fund customized job training: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Target for employees of area manufacturers who are expanding their activities or changing their product lines Use JTPA funding and leveraging private funds wherever possible. 				Economic Development Dept.
ED-7	Continue to fund and present training programs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On-job readiness skills English as a Second Language Other programs that directly address the perceived inadequacies of the available workforce in the area Consider focusing efforts on developing job sectors. 				Economic Development Dept.

9. IMPLEMENTATION

ED-8	Promote the development of an office/commercial incubator: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide space and services to startup and early-stage businesses. 				Economic Development Dept.
ED-9	Develop a structured, publicized entrepreneurial assistance program: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop in cooperation with other public and private entities, which provide entrepreneurs with networking opportunities and practical education in business management. 				Economic Development Dept.
Importing Capital and Expanding Cranston's Economic Base					
ED-10	Co-sponsor export seminars and trade missions for Cranston manufacturers and other prospective exporters: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target sectors associated with the U.S. Department of Commerce, the State Economic Development Department, freight forwarders and customs brokers, and the City and Port of Providence. 				Economic Development Dept.
ED-11	Monitor information from public and private sources on overseas markets for manufactured goods: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify Cranston-based manufacturers of such goods and alert them to sales opportunities. 				Economic Development Dept.
ED-12	Maintain and regularly update a database of information on industrial space for lease: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on space, which is available in small increments suitable for start-up industries. 				Economic Development Dept.
ED-13	Continue providing hands-on assistance to growing businesses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide assistance with financing, permitting, and other needs. 				Economic Development Dept.
Targets for Smart Growth Projects					
ED-14	Target large-scale, smart growth redevelopment opportunities at strategic locations to accommodate mixed-use, transit-oriented development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Properties along I-95 such as the Wellington/Elmwood industrial area • Properties at the I-295/Rt. 37 intersection. 				Economic Development Dept. Planning Department

9. IMPLEMENTATION

ED-15	Target medium-scale, smart growth redevelopment opportunities. Consider additional locations near: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Garden City Center • Rolfe Square • Knightsville • Along I-95 and I-295. 				Economic Development Dept. Planning Department
ED-16	Target high-end business growth in professional, service-oriented businesses, and the markets for office space.				Economic Development Dept. Planning Department
ED-17	Target grocery-anchored, neighborhood or community shopping centers serving the growing markets in western Cranston and Scituate.				Economic Development Dept. Planning Department
Targets for Industrial and Commercial Projects					
ED-18	Target hotel and lodging accommodations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on locations where there is easy access to the T.F. Green airport. 				Economic Development Dept. Planning Department
ED-19	Target leisure and/or entertainment-related businesses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider areas near the Park Theater in Rolfe Square as well as in the emerging retail destination around the Garden City Center. 				Economic Development Dept. Planning Department
ED-20	Assist the State in redeveloping state properties at the Pastore Center: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on private, commercial components. 				Economic Development Dept. Planning Department
ED-21	Review sewer line extension and roadway acceptance policies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the policies promote the type of development planned for western Cranston. 				City Council Planning Commission Planning Department
Revitalization Projects					
ED-22	Target improvement of neighborhood commercial centers to service their market area and to reduce congestion for cross-town traffic. New neighborhood village center developments should be focused at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scituate Avenue and Pippin Orchard Road • Phenix Avenue and Natick Avenue. • Redevelopment of neighborhood centers should continue to occur at Pawtuxet Village, Knightsville, and Rolfe Square. 				Planning Department
ED-23	Distinguish between each commercial center: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop design guidelines for public properties • Include signage, street furniture, landscaping, public parking areas, bicycle ways, and sidewalks. 				Planning Department

9. IMPLEMENTATION

ED-24	<p>Develop design guidelines for site development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address different conditions and smart growth goals • Distinguish between each type of commercial area; major commercial center, village center, highway or arterial commercial. • Development adjacent to transit. 				Economic Development Dept. Planning Department
Improved Business Climate					
ED-25	<p>Improve relations with developers, businesses, and property owners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with regulatory staff to proactively inform and assist developers in regulatory and approval processes. 				City Council Planning Commission Planning Department
ED-26	Continue providing hands-on assistance to growing businesses with financing, permitting, and other needs.				Economic Development Dept.
Regional Coordination					
ED-27	Encourage the Town of Johnston to rezone property on the north side of Plainfield Pike for industrial uses.				Mayor City Council
ED-28	Keep planning officials in Town of Johnston informed of changes in zoning requirements and encourage them to adopt similar changes.				Mayor City Council Planning Commission Planning Department

NATURAL RESOURCES (NR)

	Action	Time Frame			Responsibility
		Short (within 1 yr)	Medium (2-3 yrs)	Longer (4-5 yrs)	
Protection of Cranston's Natural and Environmental Resources					
NR-1	Use local zoning and land use regulations to assess and mitigate development impacts on rare and endangered species. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and prioritize critical habitat areas in western Cranston. Locate habitats of rare and endangered species.				City Council Conservation Commission Planning Department RIDEM Planning Commission
NR-2	Adopt watershed management plans: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare plans in accordance to RIDEM standards to address potential pollution in compliance with NPDES Phase II requirements Seek non-point source pollution mitigation funds from the state to assist in preparation.				City Council Planning Commission Planning Department Public Works Department
NR-3	Promote a 'green' building program for all new construction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider a LEED-type program to analyze energy efficiency and sustainability. 				City Council Plan Commission Planning Department DPW Building and Zoning Department
NR-4	Ensure that the State and Federal "brownfield" programs are identified as potential resources for redevelopment of industrial sites. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to work with state and federal agencies to complete the remediation activities at contaminated sites such as the former Ciba-Geigy plant. 				Economic Development Dept. Planning Department City Council Planning Commission Public Works Department Conservation Commission RIDEM EPA
NR-5	Adopt a Transfer of Development Rights ordinance. Use development regulations to better manage development throughout the City.				City Council Plan Commission Planning Department West Bay Land Trust

9. IMPLEMENTATION

NR-6	<p>Adopt a 'farm-based retail' district.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pattern regulation similar to the South County, Rhode Island proposal (Farm and Forestry Strategies Report). 				<p>City Council Plan Commission Planning Department</p>
NR-7	<p>Develop a comprehensive septic system management program</p>				<p>City Council Public Works Department</p>
NR-8	<p>Continue to implement the open space preservation strategy for Western Cranston. Identify high value agricultural sites and open space areas to be permanently preserved. Identify and implement strategies to protect the aforementioned property.</p>				<p>City Council Planning Commission Planning Department Conservation Commission</p>
NR-9	<p>Amend the cluster development regulations to reflect conservation design standards (i.e. conservation subdivisions)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use program in order to facilitate the preservation of significant areas of open space and environmentally sensitive areas. <p>Require Conservation Subdivisions as the preferred form of land development.</p>				<p>City Council Planning Commission Planning Department</p>
NR-10	<p>Require all subdivisions that propose on-site wells to include an analysis of groundwater.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set standards suitable to verify conformance with RIDEM's Rules and Regulations relating to Drinking Water Wells. 				<p>Planning Commission Planning Department Public Works Department</p>
Surface Water Quality					
NR-11	<p>Adopt programs for improvement of the City's lakes and ponds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Base the programs on the water quality data collected since the last Comprehensive Plan. • Continue to support, and where possible further develop, the volunteer pond watching program for sampling of water quality. 				<p>Public Works Department Conservation Commission RIDEM University of Rhode Island</p>
NR-12	<p>Develop management programs for specific high-priority water bodies in order to improve water quality and foster increased recreational use.</p>				<p>City Council Planning Department Public Works Department Conservation Commission Planning Commission</p>

9. IMPLEMENTATION

NR-13	<p>Implement the watershed protection strategies recommended in the State's Scituate Reservoir Management Plan in order to ensure the future quality of this water supply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prohibit underground storage tanks • Increase minimum residential lot size to 120,000 sq ft per lot. • Revise subdivision regulations to require specific erosion and stormwater controls for new road construction and improve water quality in the runoff. <p>Exclude the watershed area from future extension of utility services, except to service existing well contamination problems and septic system failures, after exhausting all other remedies.</p>				<p>City Council Planning Commission Planning Department Public Works Department</p>
NR-14	<p>Implement Best Management Practices (BMP's) for pesticides and fertilizers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with local farms to implement the practices. • Work with local businesses to manage bulk storage and movement of the materials. 				<p>University of Rhode Island Cooperative Extension Service Conservation Commission RIDEM</p>
NR-15	<p>Implement Best Management Practices (BMP's) for stormwater and erosion controls:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include requirements for all new subdivision and development projects. • Implement the recommendations of the Fuss & O'Neill stormwater management study. 				<p>Planning Department Conservation Commission RIDEM Planning Commission Cooperative Extension Service University of Rhode Island</p>
NR-16	Adopt an Underground Storage tank ordinance.				<p>City Council Public Works Department Conservation Commission</p>
NR-17	Ensure that municipal salt storage piles are adequately covered.				<p>City Council Public Works Department</p>
NR-18	Establish Watershed Management Plans, where necessary in cooperation with adjacent communities.				<p>City Council Plan Commission Planning Department Conservation Commission Pawtuxet River Authority RIDEM EPA</p>

9. IMPLEMENTATION

NR-19	<p>Adopt standards, such as Low Impact Development techniques, to better manage stormwater from roadways in new construction.</p> <p>Reduce impervious surfaces in new developments such as with porous pavements and reduced travel lane widths to reduce runoff.</p>				<p>Conservation Commission Planning Department Planning Commission Department of Public Works RIDEM</p>
NR-20	<p>Create restoration plans for the banks of the Pocasset and Pawtuxet rivers where roadways and development have degraded the rivers.</p>				<p>Conservation Commission Planning Department Planning Commission Pawtuxet River Authority Department of Public Works</p>
NR-21	<p>Adopt a nutrient loading ordinance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce pollutant loading to the rivers, streams and water bodies. 				<p>City Council Conservation Commission Planning Department Planning Commission Pawtuxet River Authority</p>

HISTORIC PRESERVATION (HP)

	Action	Time Frame			Responsibility ¹
		Short (within 1 yr)	Medium (2-3 yrs)	Longer (4-5 yrs)	
Survey, Inventory, and Traditional Preservation Techniques					
HP-1	Nominate eligible individual properties and districts to the National Register of Historic Places and the State Register.				Planning Department Historic Commission
HP-2	Continue to establish local historic overlay districts for areas and begin designation of individual structures. Make Pawtuxet Village a Local Historic District. Make Edgewood / Taft Estate Historic District a Local Historic District. Make Norwood Avenue Historic District a Local Historic District. Make Rolfe Street Commercial District a Local Historic District.				Planning Department Historic Commission City Council Planning Commission
HP-3	Continue to identify and implement appropriate economic incentive programs to encourage historic preservation and rehabilitation.				Planning Department Historic Commission City Council Planning Commission
HP-4	Continue to include archeological review of development projects according to the state database.				Planning Department Historic Commission Planning Commission
HP-5	Continue to update and expand the survey of the historic properties on a citywide basis.				Planning Department Historic Commission
HP-6	Continue to work with private property owners to encourage preservation of known archeological and historic sites on their land.				Planning Department Historic Commission
HP-7	Continue the role of the Historic Commission as the principle city agency for historic preservation.				Historic Commission City Council
Historic Preservation Planning and Development Policies					
HP-8	Create a task force to look at the options and demands of tourism focused on the historic resources of the City.				Planning Department Economic Development Department Historic Commission

9. IMPLEMENTATION

HP-9	Establish study committee(s) for identified threatened historic properties to include representation from district and property when possible.				Historic Commission Planning Department City Council
HP-10	Enact a demolition ordinance imposing a waiting period before demolition of historic buildings in order to provide an opportunity to consider alternatives to demolition.				Planning Department Historic Commission City Council Planning Commission
HP-11	Continue to implement design review and procedural guidelines for historic district zoning in designated areas.				Planning Department Historic Commission
Education and Citizen Awareness					
HP-12	Survey accurate locations of historic cemeteries using GPS and submit the coordinate data to the City's IT department in order to map the cemeteries on GIS maps with plat and lot information.				Historic Cemetery Commission IT Department
HP-13	The Historic Commission should target specific areas such as Pawtuxet Village to educate the neighborhood about the benefits of a Local Historic District designation.				Planning Department Historic Commission
HP-14	Assist residents and city administration to understand and appreciate the importance of preserving historic buildings and places.				Planning Department Historic Commission
HP-15	Distribute information and guidance on preservation, based on the Secretary of Interiors Standards of Preservation, for public and private use.				Planning Department Historic Commission

SERVICES AND FACILITIES (SF)

	Action	Time Frame			Responsibility ¹
		Short (within 1 yr)	Medium (2-3 yrs)	Longer (4-5 yrs)	
Services and Facilities					
SF-1	Create a Pavement Maintenance Plan: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Program a regular series of improvements to the street system. 				Public Works Department
SF-2	Establish a signage program to replace signs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a consistent design standard that defines the community and individual neighborhoods where the signs are erected. 				Public Works Department
SF-3	Establish and maintain a Capital Sewer Fund.				City Council Planning Department Public Works Department
SF-4	Determine steps to resolve illegal connections to sewerage system.				Public Works Department
SF-5	Advance nutrient reduction for the wastewater treatment plant discharge to the Pawtuxet River: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set the goals to improve conditions and flows within the river. 				City Council Public Works Department Viola Water
Building Improvements					
SF-6	Adopt energy conservation standards for City facilities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a long-term program to reduce energy costs for the City. 				Building Maintenance Public Works Department
SF-7	Continue to evaluate the need for a new municipal fire station in the southwestern part of the City: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate in accordance with the growth of Western Cranston. 				Planning Department Fire Department
SF-8	Promote the construction of library facilities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Western Cranston branch library. 				Planning Department Library Department
SF-9	Coordinate City Hall, High School, and School Administration building projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide design and construction oversight for greater efficiency in use of existing space. 				Planning Department School Department

9. IMPLEMENTATION

Western Cranston					
SF-10	Allow sewer and water tie-ins to the existing sewer and water lines in western Cranston where appropriate.				City Council Planning Commission Public Works Department Public Utilities
SF-12	Establish a Septic System District.				City Council Planning Department Public Works Department
SF-13	Explore the alternative of siting the new western Cranston branch library within the Village Center concept.				Library Department Planning Department
Capital Improvement Program					
SF-14	Develop criteria for priority ranking of capital facilities as part of the City's Capital Improvement Program.				City Council Planning Department Planning Commission Public Works Department
SF-15	Establish and maintain a Facilities Maintenance Fund. Set aside funds for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roadway pavement repairs and upgrades Sidewalks Street trees Signs Snow plowing Energy efficiency in public buildings. 				City Council Planning Department Public Works Department
SF-16	Continue to identify existing facilities, which could be used for records storage. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If no such space is available, construct additional vault space to meet records storage requirements. 				City Clerk Public Works Department
SF-17	Continue to seek consolidation of municipal offices and services in the vicinity of City Hall. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide room for future expansion. 				Mayor City Council
SF-18	Establish a program to reevaluate the fiscal impact fees on a regular basis.				Planning Commission Planning Department Building Inspector City Council

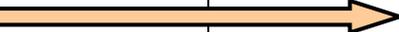
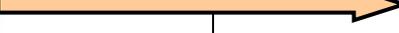
OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION (OS)

	Action	Time Frame			Responsibility
		Short (within 1 yr)	Medium (2-3 yrs)	Longer (4-5 yrs)	
Capital Improvements					
OS-1	<p>Continue to acquire key potential open space parcels. Potential parcels are identified in the Open Space and Recreation Plan. Acquisition should be reserved for important parcels that cannot be protected by other means.</p> <p>Acquisition Priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land along inland and coastal water bodies and waterways to ensure access to and protection of these natural resources. Land which has scenic beauty or vistas. Land within the Scituate Reservoir watershed Land which is important from a historical or cultural standpoint Land which create or expands connection for open space corridors Land for City parks and recreation Land which is environmentally sensitive (i.e. wetlands) 				<p>City Council Planning Commission Conservation Commission Recreation Department Planning Department West Bay Land Trust Pawtuxet River Authority</p>
OS-2	Develop programs to enhance the Historic Scenic Farm Loop, and promote it on a regional basis.				<p>Recreation Department Planning Department Conservation Commission West Bay Land Trust</p>
OS-3	Identify other scenic routes that are similar to the HSFR.				<p>Conservation Commission Planning Department</p>
OS-4	Improve existing public access to the waterfront.				<p>Recreation Department Planning Department Pawtuxet River Authority</p>
OS-5	Expand greenways and watercourses that link with other recreational resources.				<p>Recreation Department Planning Department Pawtuxet River Authority</p>

9. IMPLEMENTATION

OS-6	Acquire or improve public lands for pocket parks for all ages in Cranston's urban neighborhoods.				City Council Planning Commission Conservation Commission Recreation Department Planning Department Public Works Department
OS-7	Employ a variety of tools to preserve environmentally sensitive land and open space as well as improve public recreation tools such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fee simple acquisition • Conservation easements • Purchase of development rights • Transfer of development rights • Tax incentive programs • Land donations 				City Council Planning Commission Conservation Commission Recreation Department Planning Department
Improvements to Existing Facilities					
OS-8	Continue to upgrade and expand recreational opportunities at existing sites to serve all segments of the population.				Recreation Department Planning Department City Council
OS-9	Ensure recreational facilities allow access to people of all ages and are American with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant.				Recreation Department Building Department City Council
OS-10	Continue to improve existing access to the waterfront. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inventory all points of public ownership and access. • Improve access to riverfronts. • Improve access to Narragansett Bay. 				City Council Planning Commission Conservation Commission Recreation Department Planning Department
OS-11	Transfer school recreation sites to the Recreation Department jurisdiction, as appropriate.				Recreation Department School Department City Council
Administrative and Management Actions					
OS-12	Continue to promote acquisition and management of open space through partnerships with local and regional non-profit agencies such as the West Bay Land Trust.				City Council Planning Commission Conservation Commission Recreation Department Planning Department Land Trusts

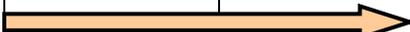
9. IMPLEMENTATION

OS-13	<p>Adopt a River Corridor and Pond Access Overlay District that creates linear buffers and public access points along the major rivers and to the largest ponds.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give priority to protecting and improving the urbanized river corridors. • Include controls within the subdivision regulations to protect and enhance water resources. 				<p>City Council Planning Commission Conservation Commission Recreation Department Planning Department</p>
OS-14	<p>Continue to invest in the Cranston Bicycle Network to expand and improve its functionality and quality. Consider establishing an East/West Bike Path utilizing the Providence Water Supply Board's aquifer right-of-way.</p>				<p>City Council Planning Commission Conservation Commission Recreation Department Planning Department RIDOT Providence Water Supply Board</p>
OS-15	<p>Adopt and encourage use of subdivision and zoning regulations that support conservation of open space in residential developments.</p>				<p>City Council Planning Commission Conservation Commission Planning Department</p>
OS-16	<p>After School Recreation Programs: Coordinate actions between the YMCA, Recreation Department, and School Department to provide expanded after school programs to meet growing needs.</p>				<p>School Department Recreation Department PTO YMCA</p>
OS-17	<p>Partner with local and regional non-profits to obtain and manage open space.</p>				<p>Recreation Department Planning Department Planning Commission Conservation Commission West Bay Land Trust Nature Conservancy</p>
OS-18	<p>Designate and protect scenic roads.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify scenic roads and establish standards for their protection. 				<p>Planning Department Conservation Commission Planning Commission West Bay Land Trust</p>
OS-19	<p>Provide adequate funding for maintenance and improvements of City recreation facilities and sites.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to explore user fees and other revenue generating measures. • Encourage the common user groups to participate in the field maintenance. 				<p>Recreation Department City Council</p>

9. IMPLEMENTATION

OS-20	Continue to seek State improvements at State-owned recreation facilities and sites: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to encourage State improvements. • Where appropriate, seek transfer to City control if it improves maintenance. 			Recreation Department Planning Department RIDEM
Actions Requiring Further Study				
OS-21	Investigate improving access to and water quality in Cranston ponds to increase recreational and natural resource value.			Conservation Commission Recreation Department Planning Department RIDEM
OS-22	Reestablish Community Garden Programs in both eastern and western Cranston where appropriate.			Conservation Commission Planning Department RIDEM

CIRCULATION (C)

	Action	Time Frame			Responsibility
		Short (within 1 yr)	Medium (2-3 yrs)	Longer (4-5 yrs)	
General Traffic Operations: Traffic Congestion on East – West Arterials					
C-1	Investigate proposals to improve safety and the flow of traffic on arterials.				Public Works Department
C-2	Reduce or eliminate on-street parking on arterial roadways to improve roadway capacity.				Public Works Department
C-3	Enforce on-street parking restrictions.				Police Department
C-4	Provide left turn lanes to reduce conflicts at intersections.				Public Works Department
C-5	Identify potential east-west routes for through traffic				Public Works Department Planning Department
C-6	Prioritize problems at intersections and investigate improvements.				Public Works Department
C-7	Establish a program of intersection improvements.				Public Works Department
Traffic Accidents					
C-8	Identify high accident locations and establish program of remedial measures.				Public Works Department Police Department
C-9	Give priority to pedestrian safety improvements at key locations.				Public Works Department Planning Department
Through Traffic in Residential Neighborhoods					
C-10	Conduct analysis of local street sign controls in conjunction with east/west access studies.				Public Works Department
C-11	Consider peak period restrictions on particular short cut routes.				Public Works Department Planning Department

9. IMPLEMENTATION

Alternative Transportation Modes					
C-12	Promote and support fixed-route bus services.				RIPTA Planning Department
C-13	Make information on public transportation widely available.				RIPTA Planning Department
C-14	Secure and preserve railroad rights-of-way for future transportation corridors.				RIDOT Public Works Department Planning Department
C-15	Incorporate bicycle access in major developments.				Planning Department
Curb Cuts on Arterial Route					
C-16	Restrict access to new development from major arterials.				Planning Department
C-17	Regulate curb cuts through design standards.				Planning Department
C-18	Provide left-turn lanes on arterial roadways where curb cuts to new development are unavoidable.				Planning Department
C-19	Encourage collector driveways to limit the number of access points.				Public Works Department Planning Department
Parking					
C-20	Require compliance with parking standards in Zoning Ordinance and discourage on-street parking.				Planning Department Police Department
C-21	Encourage off-street parking at existing developments.				Planning Department Police Department City Council
C-22	Encourage shared parking.				Planning Department
C-23	Require provision of landscaping to delineate parking areas and provide buffers.				Planning Department
C-24	Review and update parking standards in Zoning Ordinances.				Planning Department Planning Commission City Council
C-25	Restrict on-street parking where feasible.				Public Works Department Planning Department City Council

Western Cranston Roadway Network					
C-26	Identify roadway improvements to eliminate safety and operational problems.				Public Works Department Planning Department
C-27	Identify improvements to roadway links to safely accommodate increased traffic volume. Focus should be on: (1) existing deficiencies on Scituate Avenue (Route 12), (2) link to Route 37 corridor.				Planning Department. Public Works Department
C-28	Undertake detailed study and program of improvements for the Pippin Orchard Road/ Hope Road / Phenix Avenue / Wilbur Avenue / Natick Avenue corridor.				RIDOT Public Works Department Planning Department City Council Planning Commission
C-29	Encourage roadway links between the Hill Side Farm Neighborhood and Pippin Orchard Road.		 		Planning Department. Planning Commission City Council Public Works Department
C-30	Limit access points to collector and arterial roadways in new developments. Restrict local streets connections to collector roads where possible.				Planning Department. Public Works Department
C-31	Establish a program of improvements for specific roadway segments and intersections based on identified problems.				RIDOT Public Works Department Planning Department Planning Commission City Council
Park Avenue Study					
C-32	Investigate appropriate improvements to eliminate safety and operational problems.				Planning Department Police Department Public works Department
C-33	Divide study into segments to reflect the differing traffic situations and adjacent land uses such as: Wellington Avenue to Pontiac Avenue (including Rolfe Square); Pontiac Ave. to Reservoir Avenue (including City Hall and East High School); Reservoir Ave. to Gansett Ave.; Gansett Ave. to Cranston Street; and Phenix Ave. to Atwood Ave. Some of these segments may be combined.				Planning Department Public Works Department Planning Commission City Council RIDOT
C-34	Remove on-street parking where appropriate.				Planning Department Public Works Department City Council
C-35	Identify locations for off street parking or shared parking arrangements between cooperating and abutting businesses that have off street parking.				Planning Department

9. IMPLEMENTATION

C-36	Identify street beautification improvements such as sign design controls, street trees and other landscaping, public art, new sidewalks, trash receptacles, lighting and benches.				Planning Department Public Works Department
C-37	Create special Park Avenue Study Advisory Committee representing merchants, City Hall, Cranston High School East and other major affected parties to advise on recommendations and monitor implementation.				Planning Department
Actions Requiring Further Study					
C-38	Investigate a commuter rail station and support of a Transit Oriented Development (TOD) in the Elmwood/Wellington Avenues area.				RIDOT Amtrak Planning Department

In addition to the Future Land Use Plan that has copied onto this disk, the City's GIS Department has prepared an online interactive Future Land Use Plan. This Plan may be accessed as follows:

- The Plan may be accessed on a City computer at <http://blade06/FutureLandUse?resetsession=true>
- The Plan may be accessed on line [external to City Hall] at <http://www.cranstonri.com/generalpage.php?page=4190>
- The Future Land Use Map may be accessed on line [external to City Hall] at http://gis.cranstonri.org/chnas02_imaging/publicViewing/FutureLandUse/FutureLandUse_ProposedAmendments_2012_June.pdf